NATIVIST FICTION IN CHINA AND TAIWAN: A THEMATIC SURVEY

by

Rosemary Maeve Haddon

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1973
M.A., The University of Victoria, 1986

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Department of **ASIAN STUDIES**

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

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Abstract

This dissertation comprises a historical survey and thematic analysis of the various regional and temporal expressions of Chinese and Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue ("nativism" or "homeland literature"). Chapter One traces Chinese xiangtu wenxue from the rural stories of Lu Xun through the 1920s generation of writers of xiangtu wenxue (xiangtu zuojia 鄉土作家). These writers used two different narrative modes to analyze China's deepening rural crisis. One of these was the antitraditionalist mode inspired by Lu Xun; the other was a positivist mode formulated from new concepts and intellectual thought prevalent in China at the time of May Fourth (1919). The narrative configuration established by this decade of xiangtu writers is characterized by nostalgia and is based on the migration of the Chinese village intellectual to large urban centres. This configuration set the standard for subsequent generations of writers of xiangtu wenxue who used an urban narrator to describe a rural area which was either the author's native home, an area he/she knew well or one which was idealized.

Chapters Two and Five discuss Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue from the 1920s to the 1970s. The emergence of this fiction is linked with Taiwan's insecure status in the forum of international relations. In Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue, the countryside is a refuge from the forces of modernization; it is also a storehouse nurturing ancient traditions which are threatened by new and modern ways. Taiwan's xiangtu writers valorize traditional culture and seek in rural Taiwan a transcendent China predating Taiwan's invasion by the West. These works are all narrated by an urban narrator who rejects modernity and desires to counteract foreign influences.

The focus of Chapter Three is China's rural regional xiangtu wenxue of the 1930s. In this decade, rural fiction became a general trend in China with the rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Japanese aggression and China's increasing urbanization. The shift away from China's urban-based fiction is characterized by an increasing concern for the peasants, regional decay under the onslaught of Westernization and the life, customs and lore of China's hinterland. In
many of these regional works, concern for the nation is interwoven with non-nationalistic interests.

Chinese xiangtu wenxue of the 1940s and 1950s is discussed in Chapter Four. The xiangtu wenxue of this period took on a distinctly Communist guise in the wake of Mao Zedong's 1942 Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art. Chinese Communist xiangtu wenxue is primarily defined as revolutionary realism and is concerned with the construction of Chinese socialism which takes place in the countryside through the forced implementation of draconian Party policies. The peasants in this fiction often attempt to evade these policies. Occasionally, these stories and novels slip into a hardcore realistic mode conveying a peasant reality which strongly dissents from the orthodox Party view. At least one writer of this period was persecuted and killed for his putatively disloyal beliefs.

Finally, with the passing of Maoism in China, a new form of xiangtu wenxue emerged in the mid-1980s. This is the subject of Chapter Six. In these works, traditional Chinese culture supercedes Maoism as the basic fabric unifying Chinese life. Many of the writers in this period evince a psychological bifurcation arising from their conflicting views about the value of traditional Chinese culture. This bifurcation stems from the narrator in this fiction who is caught up in the process of urbanization and is unable to fully integrate his vision of the countryside into a larger vision of modernity. The ambivalence about Chinese culture in xiangtu wenxue is a leitmotif which underlies xiangtu wenxue's many, disparate forms.
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Introduction

_Xiangtu wenxue_ emerged in China in the wake of the May Fourth Movement. In its early phase, this subgenre\(^1\) represents an infusion of many of the social, economic and populist concerns of May Fourth. Primary among these are the concern for the common person, particularly the peasant, the notion of social and economic rights, the survival of the Chinese nation in the face of imperialism and warlordism and the breakdown of the old cultural order and the emergence of the new. These concerns reflect China's search for modernity which continues to be the primary concern of twentieth century China. As for _xiangtu wenxue_, the search for modernity is a fundamental law which governs the first appearance of this literature and its subsequent fictional development.

Like all generic designations, the term "_xiangtu wenxue,"_ which I use as a descriptive rather than an evaluative term, is both elusive and problematic. The most fundamental problem, which is compounded by various other issues, is the selection of writers to be included in this subgenre. In order to carry out this selection, some very basic generic considerations must be established, the least of which are criteria differentiating _xiangtu wenxue_ from non-nativist Chinese fiction. But even this most basic differentiation is not entirely free from exceptions: the dividing line between Chinese nativist and non-nativist fiction is often blurred by grey areas. One fundamental point of division, for example, is the classification of _xiangtu wenxue_ as a subgenre of fictional works about the country or rural life in contrast to literature about urban life. An exception to this, however, is certain Taiwanese works of _xiangtu wenxue_ which centre around characters from the lower social orders who live a ghettoized existence on the margins of Taiwan's urban

\(^1\) I have classified _xiangtu wenxue_ as a "sub-genre" primarily because it is more limited in scope, both temporally and thematically, than the genre, for instance, the Chinese vernacular novel (_zhanghui xiao shuo_). At the same time, this fiction exhibits a set of literary norms, or "conventions and codes," characteristic of a "literary form" and which are also used to characterize the genre. (M. H. Abrams, "Genre," _A Glossary of Literary Terms_, 5th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1988): 73, 72.)
life. Other exceptions are pieces of Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue about urban office workers or other characters of varied educational backgrounds who encounter problems adapting to modernity or who sometimes completely fail to make the transition to a fully urbanized life. Notwithstanding the urban setting of these works, their themes are interwoven with conceptions about the countryside, and they evoke the continuum of Chinese agrarian values. Thus it follows that rather than state categorically that xiangtu wenxue is about the country or is set in the country, I contend that xiangtu wenxue and its thematics are interwoven with allegorical conceptions about the country which can be either positive or negative and that they evoke agrarian values or an agrarian worldview.

For the reader who is unfamiliar with the broad spectrum of modern Chinese literature, this initial attempt at classification can be clarified by contrasting xiangtu wenxue with certain modern Chinese writers who, categorically, can be excluded from all nativist considerations. Many of these writers are considered to be important members of the canon of modern Chinese fiction, a consideration which raises questions about the relation of xiangtu wenxue and xiangtu writers to the Chinese canon. Furthermore, it raises questions about Chinese canon-formation in general. Qian Zhongshu (1910–), for instance, is a major twentieth-century Chinese writer who can be considered non-nativist for a number of reasons. The first of these stems from his considerable educational attainments— a feature not generally found in the backgrounds of xiangtu writers—and, more specifically, from his alignment with the rigorous tradition of Chinese scholarship. Besides being a writer of urban satire about contemporary social manners, Qian is a recognized scholar of both Chinese and Western literature and has a record of considerable scholastic achievement. A comparable background or record cannot be found among the xiangtu writers who, in general, hail from less elite families and are less traditional in their orientation. Qian Zhongshu's traditional type of orientation and the subject matter of his satires clearly make his fiction non-nativist.
A second criterion separating non-nativist Chinese writers from the xiängtu writers is the classification of certain of the former as "solipsists." Besides Qian Zhongshu, Ling Shuhua (1904-- ) and Eileen Zhang (Zhang Ailing, 1921-- ), both of whom are women writers from prominent, official families, are writers of urban-centred fiction with an autobiographical strain. The subjective elements of their fiction contrast strongly with the majority of works of xiängtu wenxue which tend to be socially-oriented. Ling Shuhua's fiction evinces a certain psychological insight into the lives of urban women, old-fashioned girls and children who comprise the characters of her stories. Eileen Zhang's stories, on the other hand, are more generally concerned with "bourgeois life in Shanghai and Hong Kong" and the manners and mores of the "decadent upper class."\(^2\) Zhang makes extensive use of psychological realism, which C. T. Hsia maintains is rooted in her personal emotion and her contemplation of her unhappy childhood.\(^3\) The educational as well as family background of Qian Zhongshu, Ling Shuhua and Zhang Ailing, not to mention the subject matter of their works, contrast strongly with the xiängtu writers, their backgrounds of relatively less elitism and traditionalism and elements of greater realism and didacticism of xiängtu wenxue.

As stated above, the primary criterion I have devised for establishing a subgenre of xiängtu wenxue is whether these works of fiction express certain allegorical conceptions about the country and evoke agrarian values or an agrarian worldview. A second criterion of selection is based on the extent to which xiängtu writers and their works represent the various regional and temporal expressions of the subgenre.\(^4\) There are dozens, perhaps hundreds, of writers who can be considered as xiängtu zuojia. My omission of many of these writers does not reflect on the

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\(^3\) Ibid. 407.

\(^4\) I have referred to Yan Jiayan's schematization of xiängtu wenxue in the Big Chinese Encyclopedia (Zhongguo da baike quanshu [Beijing/Shanghai: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 1986]: 1077) as a general guideline in my selection of writers. To a lesser extent, I have also referred to Chinese secondary sources and references in them to Chinese writers as xiängtu zuojia.
quality of their works but, instead, on the limited time and space of this study. These two
different sets of criteria are cumbersome, and the selection process I developed from them is
complicated by a number of other problems. Three of these are concerned with the following
issues: the differences in narrative structures in the corpus of any one individual writer which
sometimes evinces varying degrees of nativism; the difficulties in what Susan Rubin Suleiman
refers to as disengaging the "formal resemblances"⁵ among works; and, finally, the problematic
chore of critically evaluating writers and their works according to aesthetic and artistic standards.
In the first instance, a case in point is Shen Congwen's 沈從文 (1902-1989) romances which are
quite different from his first, early fictional works about his childhood which are more commonly
recognized as xiangtu wenxue. Though this is the case, I briefly discuss Shen's romances for the
purpose of comparison and in order to distinguish the nativist from the non-nativist features of
his fiction. The longer fictional work of the Manchurian writer Xiao Jun 蕭軍 (1907- ), on the
other hand, is less nativist than his shorter stories. Nonetheless, I have discussed this longer
work briefly, primarily for the simple reason that it is better-known. These differences in any
writer's works lead me to a further problem which is whether a writer can be considered a
xiangtu writer on the basis of a few nativist pieces in his/her corpus? This problem also exists
with respect to China's writers of the mid-1980s who, strictly speaking, cannot be considered
xiangtu writers. This fact, nonetheless, cannot be used to rule out certain of their fictional works
which express conceptions about the country and evoke an agrarian worldview. For this reason,
I have included various works of these writers for discussion in the final chapter of this thesis,
while I clearly maintain that I do not consider them xiangtu writers per se. In sum, some writers
I have selected for discussion in this thesis can, without a doubt, be considered xiangtu zuojia.
As for other writers who are the authors of nativist works, some prefer to be called writers of

⁵ Susan Rubin Suleiman, Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel As a Literary Genre (New York:
realism than xiangtu zuojia, while others can more properly be classified as members of other fictional schools.

The second problem mentioned above concerns disengaging the "formal resemblances" among works. Suleiman explains that these "formal resemblances" (the narrative or thematic structures) does not imply the "identity of their specific content," whether this content is political, ideological or episodic.6 Like my study, Suleiman's is the first of its kind, and the problems we both encountered in establishing a fictional genre stem, in at least one instance, from the diversity of content found in the body of works as a whole. The Chinese xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s--the focus of Chapter One of my thesis--is thematically concerned with the cultural, historic and social factors giving rise to China's chaotic rural conditions in that decade. This content is very different from that of Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue which focuses almost exclusively on questions of modernization.7 Taiwanese fiction is very different again from China's post Yan'an xiangtu wenxue which is purely Communist in content. The diversity of content in these works is vast; nonetheless, these various regional and temporal expressions of Chinese and Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue do share certain formal resemblances which lead me to formulate a definition of the subgenre which takes them all into consideration. In brief, these resemblances are three: First, xiangtu wenxue usually evokes the (urban or urbanized) narrator's rural, childhood home. In some cases, this rural home is an idealized, imaginary home located some time in the narrator's ancestral past. Second, xiangtu wenxue is structured around the country which exercisees an

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6 Ibid. 6.

7 In general, modernization is the process by which societies are transformed under the impact of scientific and technological revolutions. This process entails the transformation of a country into an urbanized, industrialized society oriented to the application of science and technology. ("Introduction,"The Modernization of China, Gilbert Rozman, ed. [New York: The Free Press, 1981]: 3, 1.) My use of this term applies to the social change associated with modernization, such as the undermining of existing social patterns, the increased international dependence and the growth of manufacture. In Taiwan, modernization is equated with "industrialization" which is used in a broad sense, not just in its connotative distinction from agrarian processes. The concept of modernization in Taiwan is also used interchangeably with "Westernization" which refers specifically to the patterns of modernization which were engendered by Taiwan's association with Japan and the U.S.
allegorical function in this fiction. There are, in the main, four meanings evoked by this allegory: the country is the locus of sociocultural and political forces which cripple the national consciousness; it is the refuge from the forces of modernization; it is the locus of transformation of the Maoist canon; and it is the locus for the examination of the inefficiency and corruption of the Chinese Communist Party. Third, the characters in xiangtu wenxue are disempowered or marginalized, that is, they are either peasants, women or other characters from the lower social orders. This definition allows for the various expressions of xiangtu wenxue which, as stated above, are separate and distinct from their specific content.

The third problem stated above is an aesthetic one and concerns the stylistic evaluation of individual works and writers according to artistic standards. This evaluation, willy nilly, has probably influenced my selection of writers. Nonetheless, in this thesis I have determined not to carry out this type of analysis, or to make an extensive stylistic evaluation focusing on the "literariness" of works or to clarify my aesthetic standards, and this is due primarily to time constraints. Suffice it to say that I find the post-Yan'an Chinese Communist xiangtu wenxue formulaic and less personally appealing than Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue or Chinese fiction of the mid-1980s.

Two final points must also be made here regarding my establishment of the xiangtu wenxue subgenre. The first concerns my use of the designation xiangtu wenxue as a descriptive rather than an evaluative term as I mentioned above and, the second, my reference to xiangtu wenxue as a "subgenre." The term "xiangtu wenxue" means different things to different people, and, in some contexts, this term has negative connotations. One such connotation arises from the popular (mis)perception of xiangtu wenxue as stylistically inferior, especially when compared to better-known works, that is, those generally classified as "canonical," and that it is "peasant" literature written by local amateurs whose educational achievements are low. As rural-based fiction, it is often deemed of less value and, ironically, as less universal than mainstream literature which focuses on urban life. Even the term "xiangtu" itself has connotations of
earthiness and rusticity which imply that such a literature exists on the very margins of art. My thesis attempts, to a certain extent, to rectify these misconceptions. In Taiwan, on the other hand, certain writers such as Hwang Chun-ming (Huang Chunming) and Chen Yingzhen dislike being referred to as "xiangtu zuojia" for these and other reasons. Hwang and a third Taiwanese writer, Wang Tuo, prefer, instead, to be regarded as writers of realism. The preferences of these writers stem, in part, from the negative connotations of "xiangtu wenxue" and, in part, from the popular confusion of xiangtu wenxue with "village literature" (xiangcun wenxue), a misconception which I discuss further in Chapter Five. During Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue movement (xiangtu wenxue yundong (1977-78), the difficulties of establishing a normative definition for Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue were aggravated by the charge on the part of certain detractors that this fiction is Communist. The arguments and counterarguments which raged during this movement are also outlined in Chapter Five.

Finally, the question of where xiangtu wenxue is located in the mainstream of modern Chinese literature, the breadth and scope of this fiction, and the issues involving the Chinese canon are all factors interwoven with my decision to refer to xiangtu wenxue as a "subgenre." As stated earlier, the primary concerns of the first forms of Chinese xiangtu wenxue in the decade of the 1920s are: the concern for the common person, particularly the peasant, the notion of social and economic rights, the survival of the Chinese nation in the face of imperialism and warlordism and the breakdown of the old cultural order and the emergence of the new. These concerns are the very stuff of what C.T. Hsia aptly refers to as the "obsession with China" on the part of many modern Chinese writers who make up the mainstream of modern Chinese literature. These concerns are not only limited to the xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s; they also reappear in the context of my discussions about Lu Xun, Xiao Jun, Xiao Hong (1911-1942), Han

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8 I have retained this romanization of Hwang's name out of respect for the writer's preference.
Shaogong 韓少功 (1952--) and Mo Yan 莫言 (1956--). Accordingly, xiangtu wenxue thus substantially overlaps with mainstream modern Chinese writing and, in some cases, can even be considered as mainstream writing. This fact alone would seem to call for its classification as a genre. Nonetheless, the fact remains that there is a strong need to separate xiangtu wenxue from Chinese urban-based literature, much of which is regarded as canonical, and this is the major factor in my decision to classify xiangtu wenxue as a subgenre (the genre being fiction). This decision is thus also normative rather than evaluative. The question of the canon, which comprises primarily urban-based fiction, also arises when we consider that many of the xiangtu writers, with the clear exception of Shen Congwen, Xiao Jun and Xiao Hong, stand outside the canon. The term "subgenre" which must accommodate vast numbers of works and writers of xiangtu wenxue has thus little to do with volume and more to do with canonical versus non-canonical issues. These issues concerning the canon, not to mention the rural-based subject matter of xiangtu wenxue and the marginalized characters in this fiction, are issues we can consider when we attempt to differentiate xiangtu wenxue from the large category of Chinese urban-based, non-nativist fiction.

From the concerns of the 1920s, xiangtu wenxue developed in different ways and embraced a variety of fictional themes. These themes include Japanese aggression, regionalism, the inception of the Chinese Communist Party and the construction of socialism and, finally, the issue of Chinese traditional culture. The xiangtu wenxue of Taiwan, on the other hand, focuses almost exclusively on the themes of colonialism and modernization. Unlike its counterpart in China, Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue emerged from the tensions engendered by Taiwan's insecure status in the forum of international politics. The scope of these issues, questions and themes in Chinese and Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue is very broad and diverse; nonetheless, it is the reason that xiangtu wenxue can be considered a type of "national literature" (minzu wenxue 民族文學).
*Xiangtu wenxue* is a mirror of the problems, issues and conflicts which have accompanied the history of these two areas from the nineteenth through the twentieth centuries.

As mentioned above, *xiangtu wenxue* first emerged in China hard on the heels of the May Fourth Movement. The stylistic and thematic configuration of *xiangtu wenxue* was influenced by various movements of both the New Culture and May Fourth Movements, such as the vernacular *(baihua* 白話) movement and the movement advocating realism in literature. Compared to the Europeanized May Fourth literature, the language of the 1920s decade of *xiangtu wenxue* is more populist, and thus it is closer to the language of the masses of the Chinese people. *Xiangtu wenxue* is thus also closer to the ideal of Qu Qiubai, the one-time Communist Party General-Secretary and head of the League of Left Wing Writers. Qu called for a true proletarian literature, one written in the common language *(putonghua 普通話)* which, he theorized, would foster class struggle. Unlike Qu Qiubai, however, none of the *xiangtu* writers in the 1920s advocated class struggle; instead, they brought a variety of popular concepts to their writing which included not only socialism but also democracy, humanism, anti-traditionalism and anti-imperialism.

The populist Rural Reconstruction movement and the folksong collecting movement were particularly significant to the emergence of *xiangtu wenxue*. At the time of the Reconstruction programs, China was experiencing severe economic chaos and social disorder which were incurred by the collapse of the old order, warlordism and imperialist aggression. The rural areas were especially hard hit, and, of all the Chinese population, the peasants in particular were encumbered with an impoverished economy and the ravages of warlords and bandits. In

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Among the various types of *xiangtu wenxue*, the type which comes closest to Qu's ideal of "proletarian literature" is that written by Zhao Shuli. Zhao is discussed in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

10 Chinese rural reconstruction was part of a global movement against modernization and European utilitarianism which was generated out of fear of spiritual and cultural deracination. See Chang-tai Hung, *Going to the People: Chinese Intellectuals and Folk Literature, 1919-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985) for a comprehensive account of this movement.
light of this situation, many May Fourth intellectuals felt that China was in need of a national and cultural revival, and they began to turn to the rural areas as the locus for this revival and for the answers to China's many problems. The major figures in the Reconstruction movement, Liang Shuming (Liang Sou-ming) and James Y. C. Yan, thus predated the Chinese Communists in their formulation of concrete social and economic measures designed to salvage the rural economy and to transform the dispersed "village society" of China into one unified whole.

The reconstructionists were originally inspired in their programs by Li Dazhao, a co-founder of the Chinese Communist Party. Li was inspired by the populist Narodnik movement of Russia which took place in the 1870s. He believed that intellectuals should "be of one breath" with the labouring classes and in 1919 exhorted China's educated youth to "go to the villages!" to learn from the peasants. Other movements engendered in China by Li Dazhao's summons were the Mass Education Lecturing corps whose purpose was to "advance knowledge of the common people and awaken consciousness of the common people," the folk literature movement (minzu 民族 or pingmin wenxue yundong 平民文學運動), and the folksong collecting movement. The aim of the folk literature and folksong collecting movements was to unearth and preserve China's traditional culture. Some of the folklorists, such as Gu Jiegang, romanticised the peasant and peasant life while others, like Zhou Zuoren, criticized the

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11 As a traditionalist, Liang Shuming is described as a "conservative nationalist who tried to resist Westernization by restoring China's ancient cultural values (fugu)" and defending the "national essence" (guocui) against the May Fourth iconoclasts. (Guy S. Alitto, The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979]: ix, xi.) Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek also formulated various programs for rural reconstruction.

James Y. C. Yan (Yen Yang-ch'ü) was a Yale graduate and a YMCA cadre. His reformist activities in China began with mass education, and in 1923 he founded The National Association of Mass Education Movements (MEM). In 1926, the MEM started a rural pilot project at Ding Xian, Hebei. This was followed by a Rural Reconstruction Movement which took part in a nation-wide change of consciousness to transform the way the village was perceived in the 1930s. (Charles W. Hayford, Introduction, To the People: James Yen and Village China [New York: Columbia University Press, 1990]: x.

12 See Chang-tai Hung 10-12.

13 Hung 17, 29.
backwardness of rural life and charged the peasants with embracing a superstitious and fatalistic outlook. To all of them, however, folksongs were the crystallization of the national spirit and represented the natural reaction of the people to the stifling code of Confucianism. All the populist movements, including the Rural Reconstruction movement, Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement and Mao Zedong's peasant movement were attempts to use a rural model to halt China's slide into disintegration. The inception of rural fiction in China was yet one more expression of the popular concern for China's rural life.

In the 1920s, the first works of xiangtu wenxue were certain stories by Lu Xun, for instance, "My Old Home" (Guixiang 1921), "New Year's Sacrifice" (Zhufu 1924) and "Village Opera" (She xi, 1922). Lu Xun was drawn to the rural areas for reasons which had less to do with Reconstruction or the rise of Chinese Communism and more to do with his conception of Chinese tradition which he conceived within the rural context. Lu Xun raised etiological questions about Chinese traditional culture which were based on the concept of China's "spiritual disease" (sixiangshang de bing 思想上的病). One expression of this concept occurs in Lu Xun's rural fiction where he ascribes certain "feudal" attributes to the peasant which are the source of the peasants' ongoing oppression.

Lu Xun was followed by the first generation of writers of xiangtu wenxue for whom he acted as a patron. These writers wrote rural fiction about the small towns and villages of the southern and interior parts of China. They were influenced by Lu Xun's rural stories and by his anti-traditionalism which they brought to bear in their examination of the traditional customs and rites and the oppressive family system in the villages. Others in this first generation spurned Lu Xun's antitraditional approach in favour of a more scientific set of criteria which they garnered

14 I have enclosed the word "feudalism" within quotations marks throughout the length of this dissertation to signify the usage conferred upon this term by post-1949 China and to distinguish it from the system in Europe between the ninth and fifteenth centuries based on the relations between the lord and his vassal. In the Chinese context, "feudal" denotes a superstitious, backward and often oppressive mentality. In Communist fiction, a "feudal" peasant is one who refuses to go along with the wishes of the Chinese Communist Party.
from the positivism of May Fourth. These writers used a criteria of analysis based on class conflict, the unequal distribution of wealth and the need for social reforms to explain the disintegration of China's countryside and the loss of the peasants' livelihood. With the rise of Chinese Communism in the 1930s, xiangtu wenxue became permeated by leftist concepts such as class struggle. The epistemology of the 1920s decade of writers of xiangtu wenxue never again reappeared in subsequent generations of xiangtu wenxue. One question I ask in the first chapter of this thesis is where xiangtu wenxue as a sub-genre fits in the spectrum of popular and serious literature in China in the decade of the 1920s prior to the programmatic literature of the 1930s?

In the 1930s, according to Leo Ou-fan Lee, Chinese rural fiction became the dominant trend of modern Chinese literature though as we have seen this trend actually began a decade earlier. The rural writers of this decade-- Mao Dun, Lao She, Ye Zi, Ye Shaojun, Ai Wu and Sha Ding, et al. -- signalled a clear and permanent shift away from the previous mode of urban-based autobiographical fiction to the rural panoramas of China's regional writers. Lee maintains that there were three factors which contributed to the emergence of this trend: the first was the onset of the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) which prompted an exodus away from the coastal areas to the Chinese hinterland; the second was the increasing momentum of the Chinese Communist revolution which by this time had moved its base to the rural areas; and the third was the patterns of urbanization in China which served to augment traditional Chinese ambivalence toward the city. Traditionally, China was characterized by an "urban-rural continuum," but at the end

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16 Leo Lee 14, 15, 21.
17 Ibid.
I have not included these writers for discussion in my dissertation, primarily due to considerations of time.
of the nineteenth century, treaty ports came into being on the coast which engendered an urban-rural split. Many intellectuals feared this trend because they associated the foreign domination of the treaty ports with increasing Westernization. "Shanghaization" (Shanghaihua 上海化) as it was called, augured the spread of Westernization in China which intellectuals and leaders such as Liang Shuming, Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek hoped to counter by their strategies for rural reconstruction. Like others during this decade, China's rural writers of the 1930s found a safe haven from the Western invasion by retreating to the Chinese hinterland. There they attempted to recapture the local colour, flavour and the traditions of a specific locale which was often one and the same as the writer's native home. These writers shifted their attention to China's rural areas partly from the fear of cultural deracination associated with Westernization and partly as a protest against a regime which was doing little to ameliorate China's rural crisis. Writers such as Mao Dun and Ai Wu wrote specifically about the rural crisis and the regime that was doing nothing about it.

The rural regionalism of Shen Congwen was also engendered by Westernization and by his fear of modernization. Shen embodied the Hunanese unease with littoral, urban China which he associated with Westernization and with the attempts to colonize Hunan. Shen Congwen differs from other writers of xiangtu wenxue  in that he romanticized the peasant, the Miao and the countryside. This mode of representation stems from the particular wellsprings of Shen Congwen's creative inspiration whereby he attempted to subvert the stifling code of Han Confucianism. The most nativist aspects of Shen Congwen's fiction lie in his depiction of regional decay and the passing of old traditions which are undermined by commercialism and other aspects of modernization. The regional writers of the Northeast (Dongbei), on the other hand, felt compelled to write about their homeland for a different reason. Xiao Jun, Xiao Hong and Duanmu Hongliang (1912- ) were inspired by the loss of their homeland to the

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Japanese to write nativist stories and novels describing the sufferings of the people of the
Northeast under the Japanese, the potential of the peasants to create change and the myths, lore
and customs of their region. In some of these works, the interests of nationalism are subsumed
by other interests, for instance, the sectionalism of Shen Congwen or the gender interests of Xiao
Hong. The privileging of the nation mode which dominates modern Chinese literature is often
absent from the works of the regional writers. One is led to question to what degree these
interests influenced China's search for modernity?

As mentioned above, the rise of the Chinese Communist Party (1921) and the establishment
of the Communist regime in 1949 were major factors in the development of xiangtu wenxue in
the 1930s and later. After Mao Zedong met with defeat in the cities in the wake of the failed
Autumn Harvest Uprising, he established his base in the rural areas of Kiangsi and Hunan. The
increasing momentum of the Chinese Communist revolution in the 1930s influenced China's
writers in their use of the tools of socialism to analyze the countryside. Mao Dun, for instance,
was among the first to analyze China's rural collapse in terms of class oppression, imperialist
aggression and the need for peasant solidarity.

The single, greatest factor which had both thematic and formal implications for xiangtu
wenxue, however, was Mao Zedong's 1942 Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art..
The Talks compelled writers to comply with the various formal and topical strictures of the
socialist realism canon;19 they also spawned a generation of proletarian literature which praised
the revolution and the Party. Under the Maoist canon, the countryside is the locus of the forces
of revolutionary transformation, and, accordingly, the peasant subject in the xiangtu wenxue of
the 1940s and 1950s is conflated with the means of nation-building, specifically, socialism.

Zhao Shuli 趙樹理 (1906-70) disputes this conceptual identification of the subject-with-nation;

19 Socialist realism is the aesthetic canon adopted by the Chinese Communist Party in the 1930s. According
to this doctrine, literature "could not merely reproduce life, it must depict life as it should be or as the party
says it should be. Events and characters of literature should be idealized portrayals in order to educate and
indoctrinate the public in the party line at a given moment." (Merle Goldman, Literary Dissent in
nonetheless, his fictionalized peasants rarely escape this identification and are ultimately constrained into compliance. Both Zhao Shuli and Zhou Libo (1908-1979) depict peasants who fall into the two opposing Maoist categories of "progressive" and "feudal." The latter often oppose the egregious agrarian policies of the Chinese Communist Party and wish to maintain their own economic interests. Because of this type of peasant representation, Zhao Shuli was branded a Rightist and considered disloyal to socialism. He was subsequently killed during the Cultural Revolution. Though China's writers of xiangtu wenxue of the 1940s and 1950s outwardly subscribed to the Maoist formula laid out in the Talks, they also found subtle ways to express their dissent.

In Taiwan, as mentioned above, xiangtu wenxue came into being on the basis of Taiwan's precarious status in the arena of international politics. Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s grew out of Taiwan's status as a colony of Japan, and the first pieces of xiangtu wenxue during this period depict the oppressive nature of Taiwan's colonial relations. In the 1960s and 1970s, Taiwan experienced rampant modernization which resulted in the further erosion of Taiwan's traditional lifestyle. Japan and the United States-- the "Other" in the xiangtu wenxue of these decades -- are censored for their economic and cultural infiltration of the island's traditional lifestyle and for its increasing deracination. The countryside in Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue is a refuge from the forces of modernization; moreover, it is also the source of a pre-Westernized, transcendent China which Taiwan's writers of xiangtu wenxue conceive as the storehouse nurturing the ancient traditions. The reader of Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue of the 1960s and 1970s is led to question whether China will experience similar problems with modernity when that country becomes fully modernized?

A final theme which is found in both Chinese and Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue is the value of Chinese traditional culture in China's search for modernity. The question of how to be both modern and Chinese first arose in China during the nineteenth century when China encountered the superior military power and the positivism of the West. Chinese intellectuals first examined
Chinese culture from the perspective of its universal validity and questioned whether the
Confucian classics could continue to act as the repository of morals and aesthetics for a rapidly
changing China. In the twentieth century, Lu Xun and other intellectuals attributed China's
ongoing spiritual crisis to Chinese traditional culture, and this conception in Lu Xun's works is
the source for his unique antitraditionalism. With the passing of Maoism in China, Chinese
writers again began to examine the question of culture and tended to either accept or reject
Chinese traditional values as a part of the modern Chinese psyche. In at least one of the works of
Mo Yan, Chinese traditional culture represents a vital source of spirituality for the peasants which
three decades of Maoism was unable to destroy.

One final point that must be mentioned is that within the dramatic setting of Chinese and
Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue the peasant is the single most important actor. In general, the
peasants are represented in an ironic mode which implies bondage or the inability to change one's
social, economic or political circumstances. The only exception to this is Shen Congwen's
fiction in which the peasant is usually idealized. In both fiction and real life China's peasants
confront immutable obstacles which govern and control their lives. These obstacles stem from
the tradition which weighs them down, the social and economic aspects of their lives which are
historically determined and which circumscribe their lives, the colonial presence or that of the
Chinese Communist Party which oppresses them, the patriarchy which tramples on Chinese
peasant women and the economic aggression which is the cornerstone of Taiwan's xiangtu
wenxue and which leads to the commodification of the "little people" (xiao renwu 小人物). All
these forces compell the peasants to expend their energies in the relentless, grinding battle for

20 See Joseph R. Levenson, Confucian China and its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity
(London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958) for an examination of the changing position of the classics in
China's nineteenth century intellectual life.

21 Some exceptions are works from Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue movement about office workers.

22 In Northrop Frye's scale of the power of the hero to act the ironic character exhibits a power of action
inferior to the one assumed to be normal. (Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays [Princeton
University Press, 1957]: 366.)
mere survival, leaving little space for the enjoyment of the aesthetic or spiritual aspects of life. If this is the reality of the lives of the peasants in China, it is not surprising that they have become such important players in twentieth-century China. It is not surprising, for instance, that the peasant was used as the primary tool with which to carry out one of the most momentous revolutions of the twentieth century. At the same time, however, the peasant still remains a marginalized subject, both in fiction and in real life. In the language of critical parlance, the peasant is a disempowered or a "colonized subject," that is, one who cannot escape the constraints of some type of bondage to a higher power. These constraints stem from the Chinese tradition which psychologically cripples the peasant; industrialization which forces the peasant into a state of commodification; and the Chinese Communist Party which has the peasant at its mercy with its draconian policies in the countryside. As a woman writer, I empathize with the peasant struggling with these various types of bondage and hope for the day when the rights of China's peasants are recognized and their struggles are vindicated.
Chapter One

Chinese Xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s:
The Sojourner-Narrator

How far did they fly? Five and a half thousand as the crow. Or: from Indianness to Englishness, an immeasurable distance. Or, not very far at all, because they rose from one great city, fell to another. The distance between cities is always small; *a villager, travelling a hundred miles to town, traverses emptier, darker, more terrifying space.*

--Salmon Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*

Budapest is my homeland/Toronto is my home
In Toronto I am nostalgic for Budapest/ In Budapest I am nostalgic for Toronto
Everywhere else I am nostalgic for my nostalgia

--Canadian writer Robert Zend (1929-1985)

Chinese *xiangtu wenxue* came into being in the decade of the 1920s as a set of fictional narratives about the farming villages in the interior and coastal areas of China. This was an unusual subject matter for this period and can account for the fact that this decade of *xiangtu wenxue* is virtually unknown. The characters in this fiction—peasants, labourers and small producers eking out a marginalized existence in the poorer, rural areas of China—are also anomalous and set *xiangtu wenxue* apart from the majority of May Fourth literature which focuses on rural subjects to a far lesser degree. At the same time, these characters also bring *xiangtu wenxue* closer to the May Fourth ideal of "mass literature" (*minzhong wenxue*), though one must look hard to find any semblance of the tendentiousness associated with this term. Compared to Chinese fiction

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Robert Zend, "In Transit," in *Beyond Labels*, quoted in *Books in Canada*
of the decade of the 1930s, *xiangtu wenxue* is less bound by a political ideology or creed and, as a consequence, it is a more realistic representation of life in China's poor, rural areas. The subjects of peasants and rural life, which were elevated to national proportions in the 1930s' decade of the Communist revolution, only served to consign *xiangtu wenxue* to relative obscurity in this pre-revolutionary period.

The majority of the writers of *xiangtu wenxue* hailed from humble backgrounds and led lives close to China's rank and file. The May Fourth writers, in contrast, were from elite or gentry families and received a traditional Confucian training which constituted a barrier separating them from China's peasant masses.² Many of the May Fourth writers were concerned with the welfare of China's rural poor: they sympathised with China's labouring classes and attempted to expose the suffering visited upon China's masses by imperialism. Nonetheless, the social chasm confronting them denied them direct or intuitive understanding of the peasants. Accordingly, some were compelled to turn to family servants or local shopkeepers who served them for models for their fiction.³ This situation stands in sharp contrast to the writers of *xiangtu wenxue* who led their lives in a plebian social and cultural milieu and whose educational achievements were low.⁴ This milieu, compared to that of the May Fourth writers, gave them access to the realities of Chinese peasant life which they transcribed easily and realistically into their fiction.

The subject matter of peasants and rural life in *xiangtu wenxue* also made this fiction different from the "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School" which, by comparison with *xiangtu wenxue*, was frivolous and had a wider entertainment value. The "Butterfly School" arose


3 Vogel 148.

4 Wang Luyan, for instance, who is one of the better known *xiangtu zuojia* of this period was the son of a shopkeeper and did not complete primary school. (Shen Siheng, Introduction, *Luyan sanwen xuanji* [Tianjin: Baihua wenyi chubanshe chuban, 1982]: 2.)
chiefly as a response to the reading demands of the Chinese urban population and enjoyed immense popularity. One can assume from the popularity of this fiction that the urban population had correspondingly little interest in realistic narratives about the harsh life of China's peasants.

The question that can be raised here is where *xiangtu wenxue* as a genre, or, more specifically, as a sub-genre, of Chinese literature fits in the spectrum of serious and popular literary expression in China in the decade of the 1920s? It is clear that this fiction reflects a wider base of interests than the Butterfly School and even the literature of May Fourth. Much of May Fourth literature is a genuine attempt to represent China's masses; nonetheless, its Europeanized language precludes this. Based on a comparison with these two types of literature, I maintain that *xiangtu wenxue* is closer, stylistically and thematically, to the popular, storytelling tradition of pre-modern China. Its inclusion of dialect and its greater degree of mimetic representation of the life of China's masses are factors which make this comparison possible. This assessment also adds greater weight to the theory that the twentieth century Chinese short story form is the inheritor of Ming and Qing vernacular fiction. At the same time, however, the ruralist focus of *xiangtu wenxue*, not to mention its predominately tragic tone, ultimately consign this fiction to a class of its own.

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5 The question of the Europeanized language of May Fourth was a concern of Qu Qiubai, the former secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and one of the first Chinese Marxist literary thinkers. Qu called the vernacular *baihua* the "new wenyan" and maintained that it was the language of the new upper-class, Western-educated urban intellectual. As such, Qu believed it was used in much the same way as the literary language had been used earlier by the gentry, to suppress the Chinese masses. (Merle Goldman, "Left-Wing Criticism of the Pai Hua Movement," in Benjamin I. Schwartz, ed., Reflections on the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium, Harvard East Asian Monographs 44 [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973]: 86-87, 85.) The 1920s decade of *xiangtu wenxue* is still written primarily in *baihua*; however, the inclusion of dialect in these stories brings them closer to the language of daily speech.


6 This is the view of Jaroslav Prusek. The contrasting view maintained by C.T. Hsia is that modern Chinese literature came into being under the influence of the European short story form. (See Jaroslav Prusek, *The Lyrical and the Epic: Studies of Modern Chinese Literature* [Indiana, 1980] for an account of this debate.)
The xiangtu zuojia are listed variously in available critical studies as Xu Yu'nuo, Pan Xun, Peng Jiahuang, Xu Jie, Wang Renshu (penname Ba Ren), Jian Xian'ai, Fei Wenzhong, Xu Qinwen, and Wang Luyan. These writers, or more correctly, their short stories, can be divided into two groups which I have classified according to my thematic reading of this fiction. The first of these groups is made up of stories which focus on the issue of Chinese culture and which are narrated from a cultural iconoclastic point-of-view. These are structured around the etiological view that there are dark forces such as ignorance and superstition which cripple the national consciousness and are accountable for China's cultural and fiscal backwardness. The idea that Chinese culture is primarily responsible for that country's backward state reflects the philosophical conceptions of the modern writer Lu Xun and Chinese thinkers from the generation of Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei who conceptualized Chinese culture as suffering from a "spiritual disease." The symptoms of this disease signified that the Chinese organism is "sick" but that it could be holistically cured through the treatment of these symptoms. The symbolic recreation of these symptoms occurs throughout much of Lu Xun's fiction.

The reappearance of this culture theme in this group of xiangtu wenxue stories reflects the apotheosis of Lu Xun's complex consciousness; however, in other areas of their fiction the writers of xiangtu wenxue also departed from the Lu Xun model. For instance, throughout his lifetime Lu Xun despaired of the possibility of a real cure of the Chinese disease, and this belief made him profoundly pessimistic. The writers of xiangtu wenxue did not share this sentiment, which is due to a number of factors. In the first place, these writers were not subject to the deep rifts and contradictions which scarred Lu Xun's psyche and, in the second

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7 I base my discussion of the 1920s decade of xiangtu zuojia on Lu Xun's enumeration of these writers in his introduction to volume 4, Xiao shuo erji, of the five-volume collection, Zhongguo xinwenxue da xi (hereafter abbreviated as Da xi) (Xianggang wenxue yanjiushe, 1935): 1-17 and on Mao Dun's introduction to volume 3, Xiao shuo yi ji: 1-32 of the same collection. I have also drawn on the two-volume publication, Zhongguo xiangtu xiao shuo xuan (hereafter abbreviated as XX), He Jiquan, Xiao Chengang, eds. (Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1986) for its selection of xiangtu zuojia.
place, they were subject to the greater immediacy of the material demands of their environment which prompted them to look for socioeconomic causes, beside the cultural factor, for China's rural decline. The writers of xiangtu wenxue inherited the cultural iconoclasm of their famous predecessor but, at the same time, they also embraced a correspondingly greater degree of psychological and scientific detachment which they brought to bear in their treatment of patriarchal familism, Chinese local customs, superstitions and practices. One can conclude from this that these writers belonged to a generation which had a less prescribed, less traditionalistic view of Chinese life and culture and had imbibed more deeply of the scientism of May Fourth. In sum, the emergence of xiangtu wenxue in the 1920s symbolized a shift away from the culturalism of Lu Xun to a correspondingly greater degree of scientific and mimetic realism. As such, xiangtu wenxue can be considered a transitional period from Lu Xun to the programmatic fiction of the 1930s.

The second group of xiangtu wenxue stories is concerned with the political and economic factors influencing life in China's rural areas. Xiangtu wenxue belongs historically to the difficult and harsh period when China was torn apart by warlordism, internal strife and imperialist aggression. The revolution of 1911 had not brought unity to the Chinese nation; on the contrary, different political groups contending for power occasioned only grief and misery for the Chinese people. The Guomindang (GMD) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) collaborated in an uneasy alliance during the period from 1923 to 1927. However, this alliance did little to alleviate the wartime conditions, and, ultimately, friction between the two parties led to the purge of the Communists in a bloody attack by the Nationalists in April, 1927. These unsettled conditions were interwoven with the rising tide of Chinese nationalism which was engendered by the indifference of the foreign powers to the terms of the Washington Conference (1921-22). The most violent eruption of nationalism was the May Thirtieth

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8 The major considerations at the Washington Conference were the Shandong question, China's territorial integrity and political independence.
Incident of 1925 which originated in a workers' strike in protest against low wages at a Japanese cotton weaving mill in Shanghai. The confrontation ended in a violent clash, resulting in one worker dead and seven others wounded. The May Thirtieth incident was followed by clashes elsewhere in China and symbolized the ideological and political ferment of this period. At the very least, it also represented a decade of repression, misery and bloodshed all of which filtered down to the rural areas.

Besides warlordism and imperialism, China also suffered from a deepening economic decline in the 1920s. As the largest sector of the economy, the rural areas were particularly hard hit. There are different scholarly explanations for this slump; however, the most popular one points to the factors of population and class structure which had particularly disastrous effects in the rural areas. China's expanding population led to rural overcrowding and to an increase in landless peasants. This situation was exacerbated by corrupt and inept bureaucratic mismanagement and by China's venal landlord class which led to the neglect of the rural economic infrastructure. Besides this, the special exemptions given to Western enterprises in the treaty ports brought ruin to many handicraft producers in the inner areas of China and forced peasants to sell their land. In the final analysis, China's worsening rural crisis in the decade of the 1920s was due to to a number of factors, including natural and human disasters, banditry, famine (1920-21), regional conflicts and heavy taxation, and of the entire Chinese population, the peasants in particular were suffering acute poverty and

12 Ibid 24.
demoralization. In sum, these national, political and economic factors are reproduced thematically in this second group of xiangtu wenxue stories.

In an extensive article introducing new Chinese writers of this same period, Mao Dun examines a number of writers of xiangtu wenxue such as Xu Yu'nuo, Pan Xun, Wang Renshu, Peng Jiahuang and Xu Jie, and he observes that the xiangtu zuojia were among the first writers in China to point out the terrible conditions in the countryside. In this connection, he cites Pan Xun's "Rural Heart" (Xiang xin 鄉心, 1922) as the first story to bewail the disintegration of the farming villages\(^\text{14}\) which, in this case, is due to the economic factor. A Gui, the young carpenter in the story, is motivated to leave his village and go to Hangzhou by his desire to avoid his share of the burden of the family debt. In Hangzhou, however, he discovers that life is not much easier, and he is compelled to join the ranks of China's urban poor: A Gui finds it difficult to obtain employment and ends up taking up residence in a narrow, cell-like room located in a tiny, narrow alley filled with several families of dishevelled women and filthy children. Like so much of xiangtu wenxue, the tone of this story is ironic and is summed up in A Gui's statement, "What is so great in leaving the countryside if I have to live like this?"\(^\text{15}\) Stylistically, xiangtu wenxue comprises a series of minimalist, linear narratives or sketches, characterized by mimetic realism, themes of bondage or oppression and an image or a simple set of images. The image of the "rural heart" in this story symbolizes the peasant who has made the physical transition to an urban lifestyle but who, at the same time, is unable to disengage himself from the numerous emotional and psychological ties linking him with the rural world.

In his critical appraisal of these writers, Mao Dun does not refer directly to them as xiangtu zuojia; instead, he merely addresses them as "writers who describe life in the farming

\(^{14}\) Mao Dun, Introduction, Da xi, 3: 27.

Pan Xun's "Rural Heart," originally published in Yudian ji, is anthologized in Da xi, 3: 272-283.

\(^{15}\) Pan Xun 282.
villages." He praises their realistic depiction of the various problems of the rural village, their direct style of language and their lack of the "defect of conceptual abstraction." A central thesis in his discussion is what he terms the writers' portrayal of the peasants' "struggle with fate," a concept which is repeated in a second article written eleven months later and which is more explicitly concerned with *xiangtu wenxue*. In this second article, Mao Dun refers to *xiangtu wenxue* as a literature about remote areas and peoples and one that describes the peculiar customs of a locale. He maintains, however, that the deeper meaning of *xiangtu wenxue* extends beyond the motif of description which is merely a beautifying device for the "tragic background" of this literature, and it is this "tragedy" that prompted Mao Dun to demand that this literature portray what he called a "struggle against fate." Mao Dun states:

As for *xiangtu wenxue*, I thought that if it only described a peculiar custom or practice it was like looking at a picture of an alien place. Even though it could amaze us, all it did was satisfy our curiosity. Therefore, aside from the descriptions of peculiar customs and practices, there must also be the universality of the struggle against fate which is common to us all.

Mao Dun's demand that *xiangtu wenxue* should depict a "struggle against fate" reflects his own development as a writer of revolutionary literature or what Lu Xun refers to as "command-obeying literature" (*zunming wenxue*), which became the literary trend in China in the 1930s. This development began with his early works, such as *The Wild Roses* (1928-29), and ended with the completion of his famous novel, *Midnight* (1933). It is

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16 Mao Dun 26.
17 Ibid.
19 Ibid. 241.
documented that originally in the act of creating, Mao Dun dramatized his subject matter; however, by the time he began to write *Midnight*, his desire to write fiction in support of the needs of the revolution led him to select and portray actual happenings in support of the leaders' interpretation of events, which he then incorporated into his writing. As a result, *Midnight* is an instance of a work of literature written with the needs of the revolution in mind. It is in this light that Mao Dun views the *xiangtu wenxue* of this decade, that is, as revolutionary literature, a view which is not substantiated in *xiangtu wenxue*. There is little of a revolutionary nature in *xiangtu wenxue*; indeed, the lot of China's peasants as it is depicted in *xiangtu wenxue* was the least of the Communists' concerns.

Lu Xun also paid considerable attention to the 1920s' generation of writers of *xiangtu wenxue*. In actual fact, his relationship to them was one of patron, and he was even instrumental in establishing one or two as important literary figures. Lu Xun's discussion of these writers, in which he enumerates Jian Xian'ai, Fei Wenzhong, Xu Qinwen, Wang Luyan, among others, is based on a different conceptual framework than Mao Dun's. Like Mao Dun, Lu Xun also praised these writers for the simplicity and strength of their descriptions which, he contends, evoke sorrow and anger. But unlike Mao Dun, Lu Xun explicitly refers to them as *xiangtu zuojia* or *xiangtu wenxue de zuojia* 鄉土文學的作家 a term which he employs to signify the fact that they were "sojourning" (*qiaoyu* 僑寓) in Beijing at the time of their writing. Lu Xun also refers to them as *qiaoyu wenxue de zuozhe* 僑寓文

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21 Lu Xun edited a collection of short stories by Xu Qinwen, the publication of which turned the author overnight into a literary success. (Howard Goldblatt, "Lu Xun and Patterns of Literary Sponsorship," in Leo Ou-fan Lee, ed., *Lu Xun and his Legacy* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985]: 209.)


23 Ibid. 8.

24 Ibid. 10.
Nativism

Chap. One

27

Sojourner-narrators) for this reason. Lu Xun's discussion of these writers is the definitive one for this period of xiangtu wenxue:

Jian Xian'ai describes Guizhou, Fei Wenzhong is concerned with Yuzhou. Whoever in Beijing writes what is in his heart, no matter whether this writer describes himself as objective or subjective, in actuality, he is the author of xiangtu wenxue. Where Beijing is concerned, this is the "sojourner-narrator." However, this is not what G. Brandes refers to as "exile literature," because what is sojourning is only the writer himself and not the works of this writer. For this reason, we see only the fleeting appearance of nostalgia in the works of these writers; only rarely does the ambiance of the alien land ring forth a response from the reader or flash before the reader's eyes. Xu Qinwen gave the title of Guxiang to his first collection of short stories, and unknowingly, he thus ranked himself as a xiangtu zuojia. However, before he could begin to write xiangtu wenxue, he was banished from his rural home, his livelihood compelling him to go off to other places....

It is remarkable that while Lu Xun failed to notice one important aspect of these writers-- the fact that they were speaking out en masse about rural conditions-- he paid such a great deal of attention to the fact that they moved away from their rural homes because of economic privation. I maintain that the primary reason for this stems from the material circumstances of Lu Xun's own background and his experiences living away from China in Japan, which had a profound effect on the course of his creativity. The similarity of the conditions in Lu Xun's life and in the lives of these writers of xiangtu wenxue led Lu Xun to identity, or at least, to empathise with them. Lu Xun's own family background is well-known. His family suffered economic decline due to the imprisonment of his great grandfather, and this led to his decision to enroll in the Kiangnan (Jiangnan) Naval Academy in Nanjing rather than to pursue an official career. The course of this decision finally took Lu Xun to Japan where he spent seven years as a "voluntary self-exile" and

25 Ibid. 9.

lone patriot. Lu Xun's epiphany in Japan led him to reject medicine in favour of writing literature. He relates that one day in his biology class he saw a slide show in which a Chinese accused of working as a spy for the Russians was about to be decapitated by the Japanese military. The Chinese prisoner was surrounded by a crowd of apathetic Chinese spectators who had gathered to watch the event. Lu Xun's reaction to this scene, particularly to the spirit of the spectators, was one of profound horror. He concluded that rather than heal the physical body of the Chinese, it was more important to "transform their spirit" and this, he felt, could only be accomplished through literature.

The xiangtu zuojia also underwent some fairly traumatic experiences while they were sojourning in Beijing. This also affected the course of their creativity. In the first place, they were exposed to the events and currents of May Fourth which were then sweeping through the capital and which were the determining factor in the development of their humanist outlook. Besides the debates on science, democracy and socialism, there was also Li Dazhao's summons to "go to the villages" which, however, was fairly superfluous where these writers were concerned.

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27 Ibid. 15, 19.

28 Lu Xun relates his decision as follows:

Before the academic year was over, I had already left for Tokyo; for, I felt henceforward that medicine was not such an important matter. An ignorant and weak people, however strong and healthy they may be, can be no more than senseless raw material or audience for the executioner; and it is not necessarily deplorable that many of them should die of illness. Thus, the first work of importance is to transform their spirit. Since I was certain at the time that literature was the best means to this end, I decided to promote a literary movement. (Lu Xun, Na han, zixu, Lu Xun quanj [Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981], 1: 416-417, quoted in Lu Yu-sheng 107.)

29 Dai Guangzhong, "Qiaoyuzhe de huailian: Lue lun ershi niandai de 'xiangtu wenxue,'" Tianjin shida xuebao, 1 (1986): 64.

30 Li Dazhao's summons is the subject of a poem by Xu Yuruo as follows:

In this pride and luxury-seeking world, 
There are some calling out: "Go to the people," 
We appreciate their good intention, 
But actually our brothers already all "come from the people."

在這騷動爭逐的世界里，
驟然有人高喊“到民間去”的，
我們很感激他們的厚意，
但是我們的兄弟，
There was another, darker side to these writers' experience in Beijing which also echoed Lu Xun's experiences in Japan. They found their surroundings harsh and inhospitable, and some reacted with repulsion. They were also filled with homesickness which prompted them to turn back psychologically to the sanctity of their old homes. Lu Xun recalls Jian Xian'ai's terrible homesickness in Beijing in which he conflates his country home with memories of his childhood.31

I... came to Beijing from far-off Guizhou, and in the midst of this sand and dust and feeling very confused, I have passed almost seven years. This cannot be said to be a short time, but how I have spent this time is beyond my recall. Day after day passes quickly by and the images of childhood become indistinct like the morning mist which spirals away and vanishes until all that is left me is a feeling of emptiness and aloneness. For the last while, except for the few poems and pseudo short stories written in the last couple of years, what else have I done? Each and every memory plucks desolately at my heart, so I have decided to print this collection of short stories ... as a means of remembering the lovely years of my childhood from which I have been separated.32

Besides nostalgia, there were other reasons for the writers of xiangtu wenxue to turn back psychologically to the village. Writers such as Xu Qinwen, Wang Luyan and Jian Xian'ai, for instance, arrived too late in Beijing to participate fully in the May Fourth intellectual scene; instead, they found themselves stranded on the beach after the main currents of thought had passed.33 When the May Thirtieth Incident erupted in 1925, they, along with other intellectuals such as Lu Xun, were deeply affected by despair over

(Xiaoshuo yuebao, 14: 6 [1923].)

31 The narrative patterns of the xiangtu zuojia-- the fact that they came from rural backgrounds and moved to the urban centres where they wrote fiction about their homes and that they conflated their homes with memories of childhood or with other images-- are the main features distinguishing xiangtu wenxue from the similar Chinese genre of "peasant fiction" (nongmin wenxue).

32 Jian Xian'ai, "Chao wu," quoted by Lu Xun in Da xi: 8. Lu Xun's empathy with the homesickness suffered by the xiangtu zuojia stems in all likelihood from his own sense as a "voluntary self-exile" living in Japan. The element of nostalgia is an important motif in Lu Xun's "My Old Home."

33 Dai 64.
this incident. Still others were repulsed by Beijing because of its degradation and darkness which are the subjects of Wang Luyan's "Sorrows of the Autumn Rain" (Qiuyude suku, n.d. 霧雨的訴苦). The writers of the Creation Society, by contrast, were engaged in positively depicting the lifestyle of the urban centres and disparaged the rusticity of the villages-- a tendency which led Lu Xun to deprecate the works of the Society as stories about "sexual love and urban darkness." Mao Dun also praised the writers of xiangtu wenxue for enlarging the range of subject matter in literature from the individual concerns, such as those expressed in the works of the Creation society, to society at large. The contrast in subject matter between these two groups of writers--those of the urban-based Creation Society and the ruralist writers of xiangtu wenxue--paralleled the growing split between the urban and the rural which increasingly characterized China's twentieth century geophysical landscape. This split, incidentally, also characterized the development of twentieth-century Chinese literature. In conclusion, the conflicting emotions the writers of xiangtu wenxue experienced in Beijing became the source for the motifs of separation and nostalgia which lie at the heart of the narrative configuration of xiangtu wenxue. This configuration runs like a leitmotif throughout the many different types xiangtu wenxue in subsequent periods of Chinese literary history.

34 In this essay, Wang Luyan castigates the urbanites for their love of money and their apathy, despairing that "The earth is filthy, everywhere is darkness, everywhere is odious." (Wang Luyan, "Qiuyude suku, in Shen Sixiang, ed., Luyan sanwen xuanji 36.) With few exceptions, Wang Luyan's works anthologized in the currently available collections are all undated. Wang's disillusionment can also be traced to his lack of worldliness which would otherwise have enabled him to cope with the "modern" (modeng) lifestyle of the city.

35 Lu Xun disparaged the Creation Society as made up of "wits and vagabonds." (Lu Xun, "Shanghai wenyi zhi yi pie," Lu Xun quanji, 4: 296.)

36 Mao Dun, Introduction, 3: 12.
Lu Xun and the Rise of Xiangtu wenxue

Lu Xun's conceptual and stylistic influences on the 1920s' decade of xiangtu wenxue began with the publication of his short story "My Old Home" which is set in the Chinese countryside. Xiangtu wenxue can thus be said to begin with him. Prior to this there were many stories depicting Chinese village life; none, however, were as influential in the formation of a ruralist trend.

As is the case in xiangtu wenxue, "My Old Home" is characterized by narratorial elements of nostalgia and separation, though in "My Old Home" the urbanized narrator is not just describing his village from afar but has returned to his village home. There he comes face-to-face with the village's economic decline and the dark forces of ignorance and superstition which have claimed the heart and mind of his childhood companion, Runtu. The narrator ends his visit in despair on behalf of his former companion. This despair has also been engendered from his sense of the futility of hope in never being able to bridge the gap between himself and the rural world he has left behind.

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Lu Xun based fourteen of his short stories in the Chinese countryside, which Leo Lee contends constitutes a "microcosm of rural Chinese society" in Lu Xun's works. The characters in this rural setting, such as Ah Q, are both individualistic and representational. (Leo Lee 60.)

One Chinese critic maintains that Lu Xun's style contains three xiangtu wenxue elements. These are as follows: his description of natural scenery and local customs (xiangfeng 鄰風), his use of dialect (xiang yin 鄰音) and his element of nostalgia (xiang qing 鄰情). (Li Yukun, "Lu Xun-- xiangtu wenxue de dianjizhe," Hebei shfan daxue xuebao, 3 [1986]: 14-17.)

38 The return of the narrator to his country village does not appear as a theme in the 1920s' decade of xiangtu wenxue. It is, however, an important part of the narrative structure of the fiction of Mo Yan 莫言, a member of the post-1979 generation of Chinese writers, for example, Mo Yan's "White Dog and the Swing" (Bai gou qiuqian jia, 1985) and "Red Sorghum" (Hong gaoliang, 1987).
In the following discussion, I have chosen three anti-traditionalist motifs or themes in several stories by Lu Xun which exercised a selective influence on xiangu wenxue. These are: the traditional Chinese oppression of women ("New Year's Sacrifice") the superstitions and bizarre customs and rituals of the rural areas ("Medicine" [Yao, 1919]) and, to a lesser extent, the apathy and ignorance of the Chinese national character ("The True Story of A Q" [A Q zhengzhuan, 1921]). These themes, which exemplify Lu Xun's iconoclastic attitude toward Chinese culture, were emulated by these writers. Lin Yü-sheng theorizes that Lu Xun and two other May Fourth intellectuals, Chen Duxiu and Hu Shi, all adopted the attitude that China's "liberation" could only be accomplished through a "total, fundamental break with the entire cultural and social order of [China's] past." These thinkers envisioned a transformation of the Chinese worldview and the reconstruction of the traditional Chinese mentality which would emerge from this break.

Lin Yü-sheng calls the approach of these intellectuals "cultural intellectualist" because of its privileging of culture over other factors such as the economy in bringing about social change. This attitude, again according to Lin, is rooted in a deep-seated traditional Chinese predisposition, one of the manifestations of which is the belief in the power of conscious ideas in transforming human life. In the thought of Lu Xun and Chen Duxiu this approach had the potential of evolving into a "holistic" way of perceiving Chinese culture which could then become a weapon for iconoclastic totalism. An example of Lu Xun's holistic way of thinking was his perception of

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41 Ibid. 26, 28.
42 This belief characterized the intellectual outlook of the Qing thinkers Kang Youwei and Yen Fu. Kang Youwei was one of the leaders of the reform movement of 1898. Yan Fu was China's first great thinker to carry out a systematic translation into Chinese of Western writers such as Herbert Spenser, Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill. He believed that the importation of these ideas into China was a necessary corollary for China's search for "wealth and power." (See Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search for Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* [Harvard University Press, 1964]).
Chinese culture as a disease infected by the traditional Chinese mind which must first be cured in order to cure the body politic.

The logic of Lu Xun's approach engendered a deep sense of pessimism in him which, however, was not shared by other thinkers nor, as I stated above, is it shared by this generation of writers of xiangtu wenxue. Lu Xun's pessimism is revealed in his discussions about his fiction in his preface to A Call to Arms (Nahan 聲喊) in which he formulates his metaphor of the iron house and in the contradictions in his fiction. Lu Xun's inability to reject certain Chinese moral ideals, notwithstanding his iconoclastic totalism, was a key factor in his intellectual tensions. His validation of the notion of filiality which is a pivotal motif of "In the Wine Shop" (Zai jiulou shang 在酒館上, 1924) reflects his mentality of "cherishing old ties" (nian jiuj 念舊) which was a major source of intellectual tensions for him.

My discussion of xiangtu wenxue begins with its Lu Xun-like cultural iconoclasm, reproduced through the motifs of the traditional oppression of women, the strange rituals of the rural areas and the Chinese national character. I begin with the first of these issues as it is philosophically treated through the character of Xianglin Sao.

Xianglin Sao's tragedy in "New Year's Sacrifice" stems from China's superstitious way of thought which is scrutinized in the story. The narrative relates how Xianglin Sao is

43 Lin Yü-sheng theorizes that Lu Xun's despair resulted from the "logic of [his] holistic demand for intellectual and spiritual revolution" and his failure to rise above this logic. (Lin Yü-sheng, "The Morality of Mind and Immorality of Politics: Reflections on Lu Xun, the Intellectual, Lu Xun and his Legacy: 109.)

44 Lu Xun relates his metaphor as follows:

Imagine an iron house without windows, absolutely indestructible, with many people fast asleep inside who will soon die of suffocation. But you know since they will die in their sleep, they will not feel the pain of death. Now if you cry aloud to wake a few of the lighter sleepers, making those unfortunate few suffer the agony of irrevocable death, do you think you are doing them a good turn? (Lu Xun, Na ha zixu 419 quoted from Selected Stories of Lu Hsun 聲喊 419 tr. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, [Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1960]: 5.)

shunned and ostracized by the village after becoming widowed a second time. She is viewed as the incarnation of bad luck and is compelled by custom to purchase a temple threshold (juan menkan 搬門槓) to atone for her remarriage. Notwithstanding her attempts to redeem herself Xianglin Sao still ends her life in beggary and starvation.

Lu Xun's treatment of this issue is typically a liberal humanist one, which also characterises the treatment of this issue in the majority of May Fourth fiction. Within this discourse, the oppression of women is ranked with little consideration of ascendency alongside a host of other problems and abuses which are the symbolic tokens of a general system of abuse. A feminist reading of this story would assert that this type of treatment violates women's "textual difference," that is, it fails to depict women's oppression as arising solely by virtue of gender differences. The critic David Der-wei Wang points out that Xianglin Sao is a symbol of the oppressed Chinese masses, which, he maintains, stems from the "old tradition of using women's predicament as a projection of social or political abuses." Though Wang's interpretation is slightly different from mine, the implication is the same: the reform of the Chinese social system is seemingly of more value than the reform of issues solely concerning women.

Tai Jingnong's "Candle Flame" (Zhuyen 1926) is similarly an account of the thematic oppression of a woman which also results from the belief in a Chinese

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46 The linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, maintains that language is a differential network of meaning, that is, there is no self-evident or one-to-one link between "signifier" and "signified" (the word as [spoken or written] vehicle and the concept it serves to evoke.) Jacques Derrida took this concept one step further by stating that meaning is achieved through the "free play of the signifier," that is, the open-ended play between the presence of one signifier and the absence of others. With the field of signification thrown wide open, writing or textuality breaks open the prison house of patriarchal language allowing for the emergence of women's "textual difference." (Christopher Norris, Deconstruction: Theory & Practice [London and New York: Methuen, 1982]: 24; Toril Moi , Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory [London and New York: Methuen, 1985]: 106, 107.)


superstition, in this case, chongxi 沖喜 (lit. "event of great joy"). Like "New Year's Sacrifice," the superstition is foregrounded in the narrative, which serves to shift attention away from the actual act of the woman's oppression. Cui'er, the female protagonist in the story, becomes engaged to the young, ailing son of a wealthy family as a result of the family's belief that a marriage arranged on their son's behalf will drive away his bad luck and hasten his recovery. Cui'er is doubly victimized by this arrangement because she is widowed a few days after being married and is subsequently forced to comply with the traditional taboo against remarriage. "Candle Flame" is a mixture of patriarchal language and superstitions which throw up a smokescreen hiding the true meaning of Cui'er's fate as a woman without separate rights.

Women's oppression is treated in a similar way in a couple of other stories of this period, in which the focal point is not superstitions per se but local customs or practices. Xu Jie's "The Luck of the Gambler" (Dutu jishun 賭徒吉順，1925), for instance, is an account of wife pawning (dian qi 典妻) in which a man is compelled to pawn his wife in order to redeem a gambling debt. The object of condemnation in the story, however, is not the fact that wives are little more than the property of their husbands to be disposed of at will so much as dissolute village life.

49 Traditionally in China, the birth of a daughter was not welcomed because a daughter will marry out and become the property of her husband's family. Cui'er's father is referring to this attitude when he states: "Ultimately, our daughter belongs to that family [lit., "other people"]." 女兒畢竟是人家 (Tai Jingnong 44.)

The image of the red bridle candles, which symbolize marriage in the story, function to shift the reader's attention away from Cui'er's oppression to the realm of Chinese superstitions. Cui'er's mother lights a pair of red candles prior to Cui'er's departure for her husband's home in the bridal palanquin. Suddenly the candle on the left glows dim as though blown by a gust of wind. This is interpreted by the villagers as an evil omen signifying that the groom will soon die. The candle on the right, on the other hand, continuously trembles and weeps which, according to village interpretation, portends Cui'er's unhappy fate after the death of her husband. (Tai Jingnong 47.)

50 Anthologized in Da xi, 3: 422-446.
In Wang Luyan's "Marriage" (Chujia 出嫁, n.d.), the custom of posthumous marriage (ming hun 冥婚), a custom which can still be seen in present-day Taiwan, is similarly held accountable for the fate of this young woman. Juying in the story has died at the age of seven or eight years, but ten years after her death her mother still insists on carrying out her "marriage." The noisy farce as it is related in the story is tinged with irony:

The first to pass were two women who were giving away the bride. A large, red silken cloth was draped over the back of each. After these women had gone the distance of half a li, the procession arrived at its destination. At the head of the procession was a large lantern on which was written a red character. Behind the lantern were eight banners and eight buglers. Following this was a long line of carefully constructed, real-looking paper children of various colours, paper maids, paper horses, paper sedan chairs, paper tables, paper chairs, paper boxes, paper rooms, and many utensils made of paper. Behind this were a drum bassinet, two carrying poles of paper dowry displays and two carrying poles of real dowry displays. After the displays came a tower-like incense urn, and after this, Juying's palanquin. This was not the same as the usual bridal palanquin; instead of being red, it was blue, decorated colourfully around the edges. A dozen or so pallbearers followed after the palanquin, bearing up a heavy coffin in which Juying's corpse lay. The coffin was on a square frame which was hung with a red woolen blanket decorated around the edges. Finally, a troupe of children came after the coffin, two sitting on the palanquin, the others walking, ready to retreat at the half-way point.

On a symbolic level, this ceremony represents the continued enslavement of women, even after death.

The final story I have selected for discussion in this section about women is Xu Qinwen's "Mad Woman" (Feng fu 瘋婦, 1923). This is a narrative about a mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship which has turned sour ostensibly due to the behaviour of

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52 Ibid. 209-210.

53 This story is anthologized in Xu Qinwen, Xu Qinwen xiaoshuoji (Hangzhou: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, 1984): 52-58.
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the daughter-in-law: Shuangxi's wife, according to her mother-in-law, is wasteful because she serves up too many fancy dishes for the enjoyment of her mother-in-law. One day the daughter-in-law has a vision of her husband who is away at sea, and she loses a sieveful of rice she has taken to the river to wash. Her mother-in-law's treatment of her worsens after this incident, and she eventually falls insane and dies. The cause of the daughter-in-law's demise is not fully accounted for in the story, but it can be better understood if we take into consideration the strains which have traditionally characterized the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship in Chinese society and the relative powerlessness of women in Chinese patriarchal society. It is popularly known that Chinese mothers-in-law abuse their daughters-in-law despite, or because of, the fact that they were similarly abused as daughters-in-law. The difficulties of this relationship are aggravated by the relative powerlessness of women within the Chinese family and can be aggravated even further by the absence of grandsons. If Shuangxi's wife had produced a son, he could have augmented the status of his mother in the eyes of her mother-in-law which would have accorded her a certain amount of protection.

Besides the issue of women, some writers of xiangtu wenxue expressed their cultural iconoclasm through the motif of the bizarre and often destructive customs of China's rural areas and the ignorance and superstitions which fuel these customs. In this set of stories, the mode of expression of this motif is derived from the concept of the spiritual disease as Lu Xun formulated it in "Medicine." The belief that imbibing human blood can cure tuberculosis which is the basis of "Medicine" is echoed in Tai Jingnong's "Tian Brother

54 The theme of women and insanity is also a theme in a piece of xiangtu wenxue from the Japanese Occupation period in Taiwan entitled "Wealth, Sons, Longevity" (Cai zi shou, 1942) by the writer Lü Heruo 呂赫若. Village rumour in this story attributes the insanity of the daughter-in-law to superstitious belief, in this case xiang chong 相沖, the belief that coming in contact with a dead person, passing by a cemetery, etc., at a time when a person is particularly vulnerable, may induce illness, insanity or even death. According to the narrative structure, however, Yumei's insanity results from puerperal fever which she had contracted after her in-laws denied her food. The withdrawal of food was their punitive treatment of her for producing a daughter instead of a son.
Number Two" (天二哥, 1926)\textsuperscript{55} in which the protagonist believes that alcohol can cure all manner of disease and that urine can relieve inebriation. The eventual expiration of the protagonist in this story is attributed to a large amount of alcohol and two large bowls of urine which his belief had prompted him to imbibe as medication.

Jian Xian'ai's "Water Funeral" (水葬, 1926)\textsuperscript{56} is an account of a different kind of custom but one which is also symptomatic of the disease syndrome. This story recalls Lu Xun’s portrait of the apathetic nature of the Chinese national character and the ignorant crowd mentality which figure in a number of his stories. According to a Chinese critic, the custom depicted in "Water Funeral" is a regional custom that appears only in Qianbei, Guizhou, and he maintains that the suffering imposed by this type of custom stems from traditional "feudal" China.\textsuperscript{57} This custom, however, also figures as the subject matter in Shen Congwen’s "Qiaoxiu and Dongsheng" (巧秀和冬生, 1947)\textsuperscript{58} set in Hunan twenty years later and is thus more universal than this critic maintains. The significance of this custom lies first and foremost in the absence of a universal legal system in China, the apathy and ignorance of the Chinese national character and, in the case of "Qiaoxiu and Dongsheng," Chinese traditional misogyny.

"Water Funeral" is a description of the penalty of enforced drowning which is imposed on a young man called Luomao who is accused of committing theft. In a separate statement, Jian Xian’ai made the following comment about the absence of habeas corpus in the village where this event took place: "The civilized Tong Village had never had a village head or other such designation. There was therefore no need to pass judgement on

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Anthologized in Da xi, 4: 417-421.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Anthologized in XX, 1: 103-108.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Li Yukun, "Jianlun ershi niandai de xiangtu wenxue," Hebei shfan daxue xuebao (supplementary issue 1986): 63.
\item \textsuperscript{58} "Qiaoxiu and Dongsheng" is an account of a young widow who is accused of violating the practice of chastity expected of widows in traditional China. She is sentenced to drown in a lake.
\end{itemize}
the criminal: the sentence could be carried out in private. The sentence of shui zang levied against thieves has been in existence in the village since ancient times. The author's moral stance in this statement is ambiguous: it is unclear if he is in fact condemning this custom or condoning it as a historical relic. The narrative stance of "Water Funeral," however, is clearer.

The omniscient narrator in "Water Funeral" relates that Luomao is compelled by circumstance to steal. He is subsequently sentenced to drown in a river. The villagers excitedly flock to the river to watch this event just like the crowds in "A Q zhengzhuan" who gather to watch A Q's execution. The spectators are devoid of even one ounce of compassion for the victim of this custom; on the contrary, one even confesses that he finds it "more interesting than the 'Western mirror' from Sichuan." There are other shades of A Qism in "Water Funeral" when Lomao shouts out on the road taking him to his death: "After a few years I shall be another stout young fellow!" Luomao's shout, however, stems less from the desire for an A Q type of spiritual victory than from the narrator's moral outrage at the barbarity of this custom.

At the conclusion of "Water Funeral," Luomao's mother anxiously awaits her son in the doorway of their home, wondering why he does not return. This motif of motherhood in "Water Funeral" attracted the attention of Lu Xun who commented as follows: "'Water Funeral' reveals for us this rural custom of far-off, ancient Guizhou and the greatness of

60 Jian Xian'ai 104. The "Western mirror" is probably a reference to the Western motion picture.
61 Jian 105. Ah Q shouted out the phrase "In twenty years I shall be another stout young fellow" on the way to his execution. ("Ah Q zhengzhuan," Lu Xun quanji, 1: 526.).
maternal love in the midst of this cruelty." "水葬" 卻對我們展示了"老遠的貴州"的鄉間
習俗的冷酷.和出于這冷酷中的母性之愛的偉大62 Leo Lee has analyzed Lu Xun's
conflicting attitude concerning motherhood and filiality in connection with "In the Wine
Shop." He maintains that the sustained dialogue between the protagonist and the narrator
in this story is a "fictional dramatization"63 of the author's attempts to sort out his inner
ferment, that is, the contradiction between his totalistic iconoclasm and his mentality of
"cherishing old ties." In brief, Lu Weifu in the story is unable to resolve his rejection of
the past with his attitude of filiality. There is no such contradiction in "Water Funeral,"
however, primarily because the notion of "cherishing old ties" is not central to the
narration. In short, the validation of certain traits in the Chinese cultural order on the part
of these writers only signified a relatively less involved, more objective and scientific
engagement with Chinese cultural problems and a selective rejection of Chinese culture.
What is of greater historical value is the question of whether Jian Xian'ai and other writers
believed in the power of the rural masses to foment social change and whether literature
could play a role in this change. Jian Xian'ai's antitradi tionalism is like Chen Duxiu's:
there is little apparent contradiction between his recognition of certain areas of Chinese
traditionalism and his totalistic iconoclasm.64

There is one final area of the culture theme in these works which is absent in the
works of Lu Xun, and this is traditional Chinese familism.65 The unquestioning, blind
acceptance of clan authority is the focus of Peng Jiahuang's "Instigation" (Songyong 愹勇,

63 Lee 64.
64 Despite his iconoclasm, Chen Duxiu recognized certain positive values in the Confucian tradition. (Lin Yu-
sheng 80.)
65 Familism does not figure as a separate theme in the fiction of Lu Xun. This may be due to his
emulation of his mother and his attitude of filiality, reflected in the fact that Lu Xun adopted his mother's
surname of Lu as his penname.
n.d.)\(^{66}\) in which family authority is the source for the intra-clan factionalism between the
two clans of Niu and Feng. This story narrates that when the age-old feud between the
two clans starts up again, Er Niang, the wife of Zhengping in the story, must follow clan
orders and be buried alive with a pair of dead swine. Er Niang subsequently attempts
suicide, and while she is unconscious she is stripped of her trousers in order to expedite
the practice of "tong qi 通氣 (channeling of air) which will supposedly bring her round.\(^{67}\)
This is an act which robs her of face and turns the uncomprehending couple into the object
of clan mockery. Xu Jie's "Gloomy Fog" (Can wu 悲霧, 1924)\(^{68}\) similarly narrates
another instance of blind obedience to clan authority. In this case, obedience results in the
engagement in village warfare between the Yu Hu and Huan Xi Villages over the rights to
develop an islet. The story concludes with many people dead. The theme of clan authority
in these two works reflects the persistence of the more severe and repressive aspects of
traditional familism in the interior parts of China, a theme which was also adopted by May
Fourth writers.\(^{69}\)

In sum, the existential state of China's masses in the decade of the 1920s was
examined by certain writers of xiangtu wenxue through the lens of culture. This factor
was used by these writers to explain the oppression of women, the persistence of strange
customs which cripple the national consciousness and the apathy and "feudal" mentality of
China's peasant masses. This paradigm reflects the legacy of Lu Xun and the profundity
of his approach in explaining China's problems. At the same time, other writers preferred

\(^{66}\) Anthologized in Da xi, 3: 482-498. This is an example of a story written with a high degree of dialect,
which is an important feature distinguishing xiangtu wenxue from the Europeanized May Fourth literature.

\(^{67}\) This obscene practice is directed at the anus and is carried out through the use of a pair of bellows in
the belief that the increased supply of oxygen would bring the victim round.

\(^{68}\) Anthologized in XX, I: 25-59.

\(^{69}\) Familism is the central theme, for instance, of Ba Jin's Jia (Family, 1931).
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to explain China's rural crisis through a totally different set of problems, to which I now turn.

The second set of *xiangtu wenxue* stories-- those which attribute China's rural crisis to natural, political and economic factors-- resulted from the education these writers acquired while they were in Beijing. In brief, this came about from the currents of thought on scientism and various political concepts to which they were exposed and which ultimately came to determine their perception. In this set of stories, the peasants are constantly victimized not by culture but by bandits, soldiers, landlord oppression and bad economics.

Prior to examining these stories I wish to first mention the mode of characterization in these works because this can give us a better understanding of the mentality of these writers, and it also takes us back to Mao Dun's attempts to classify *xiangtu wenxue* as revolutionary literature. The characters in these stories are generally depicted in an ironic or low mimetic mode, which is also the mode of a great deal of May Fourth fiction. Within this mode, the characters are governed by a sense of powerlessness and a kind of cosmic, Daoist fate which circumscribes their lives. Contrary to Mao Dun's assertion, this fate is not one which indoctrination into the revolutionary cause can ameliorate.

Traditionally in Chinese literature, especially poetry, the peasant was a fairly common topic of representation, and his or her depiction is either heroic (mythic, romantic, mimetic) or ironic (satiric or non-heroic) depending on whether the poet praised or criticized the farming situation. These two basic poetic constructs became models for later generations of writers and continue to serve as models in twentieth century fiction.

70 M. H. Abrams defines "cosmic irony" as a trope in which "God, or destiny, or the process of the universe, is represented as though deliberately manipulating events so as to lead the protagonist to false hopes, only to frustrate and mock them." (Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* 94.)

Nonetheless, it still took the new thought of the May Fourth generation, steeped in "democracy" and "socialism," to expose the roots of peasant oppression. The xiangtu zuo jia, in particular, embraced this mission, and, as a consequence, the non-heroic or ironic mode became their mode of depicting peasant life.

Some stories in this group define the fate of rural families in terms of the vulnerability of their marginal existence. This is easily upset by any natural or human disaster such as drought or illness or arrest, and in some cases, the family is even destroyed. Tai Jingnong's "Worms" (Qiuyinmen, 1926) is an account of a peasant, Li Xiao, who led a happy and abundant life until a drought year destroyed his life. A similar theme is repeated in Wang Sidian's "Paralysis" (Pianku, 1922) in which Liu Si was a useful farmer, well respected by the community, until a stroke forced him to sell his children and compelled his wife to work as a wet-nurse. In these stories, the peasants' delicate balance of existence is destroyed by natural or external factors.

Wang Renshu's "The Exhausted One" (Pibeizhe, 1925) presents a variation on this theme. The peasant Yunyang, who is one of the more defiant characters in all of xiangtu wenxue, spends his entire life labouring for others but his home is never more than a broken-down old temple. One day he is accused by his neighbour of stealing two yuan. In his defense, he claims instead that his money has been stolen from him. He calculates as follows: "During these twenty years in which I have worked, I have earned ten yuan a year, so I should have two hundred yuan. I just don't know who stole this two hundred yuan from me." This infuriates the gentry presiding over the case who

72 Anthologized in Da xi, 4: 434-440.
73 Anthologized in Da xi, 3: 304-308.
74 Anthologized in XX, 1: 84-94.
75 Wang Renshu 93.
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recommends a charge of thievery to the magistrate. Consequently, Yunyang is thrown into prison for one year and the plaintiff lands a job as investigator. Upon his release, Yunyang becomes a beggar, ironically pondering his good fortune in finding himself a new livelihood.

"Stone Quarry" (Shidang 石宕, 1926) by Xu Qinwen is a grisly story about another type of disaster shattering the peasants' marginal existence. This is one of the earliest short stories about labourers, in this case, rock-gatherers whose dangerous occupation compels them to gather rocks from a mountain quarry. Through the course of their work, the rock-gatherers either become ill because of their occupation or are buried alive by rockfall. The climax of "Stone Quarry" occurs when a group of rock-gatherers are trapped under a boulder and cannot be rescued by friends and relatives. The latter can only stand by helplessly as the victims slowly die of starvation. After two days, the call of "Help!" can still be heard issuing from under the boulder, and it was "so tragic that the villagers no longer had the courage to go there." 這樣悲惨,村中的人再也沒有勇氣走到那裏去了. With no other means of livelihood, however, the gatherers once again climb back up to the other side of the mountain in order to continue to gather rocks. The peasants suffer in this story not because of ignorance or pigheadedness, such as Lao Tong Bao in Mao Dun's "Spring Silkworms" (1932) but because their paucity of skills does not provide them with the means to a better existence. There is a strong sentiment of fatality in "Stone Quarry" which impels those involved into a stoic acceptance of their fate.

Other writers of xiangtu wenxue attributed the deepening crisis of the peasants in the 1920s to China's political situation. The peasants in these stories are victimized either by warlords contending for power, soldiers, bandits or landlords, and this is the case in Xu

76 Anthologized in XX, 1: 109-112.

77 Xu Qinwen 112.
Yu'nuo's "An Old, Worn-out Shoe" (Yi zhi p0 xie 1924). The peasant in this story, Hai Shushu, is cut down by bandits after visiting his nephew who is studying in a nearby school. Hai Shushu is left calling for help for three days in the wilderness and is then devoured by a pack of wild dogs. At the end, there is nothing left but an old shoe to serve as a token of the peasant's miserable death. I stated above that many of these pieces of xiangtu wenxue are simple, linear narratives featuring an image or set of images. The image of the old, worn shoe in this story symbolizes the empty, miserable lot of the peasants whom fate and the nation have abandoned. "An Old, Worn-out Shoe" is based on the northern village and peasants of Lu Shan and makes strong use of the northern dialect, as do other works by Xu Yu'nuo.79

Tai Jingnong's "New Grave" (Xin fen J, 1926),80 on the other hand, is an account of the destruction of a family by soldiers. In this story, a well-to-do widow, Si Taitai, is looking forward to the day when her sons and daughters can get married and establish themselves. Unfortunately, a mutiny brings death to her daughter who is first raped by soldiers then killed by them, and her son is killed by gunshot. At the conclusion of "New Grave" the widow loses her sanity and commits suicide. The sufferings of the widow in "New Grave" are like the sufferings of Hardy's Tess-- they are the result of the ironic manipulation of fate. The symbolic significance of the image of the "new grave" needs little elaboration.

Landlord and gentry oppression are the reasons for ruin in Xu Yu'nuo's "My Grandfather's Story" (Zufu de gushij, 1923).81 The grandfather in this story was once strong and able to withstand great hardship. However, he loses his fertile fields to

78 Anthologized in XX, 1: 60-83.
80 Anthologized in Da xi, 4: 428-433.
81 Anthologized in Da xi, 3: 350-358.
the landlord and ends his life filled with sorrow and hatred and his self-respect gone. This is a picture of an old peasant who has struggled a lifetime for an elusive security; it is also the depiction, according to one critic, of a social system which must be overthrown.  

The third and final factor for the bankruptcy of the rural areas is the economic factor. As mentioned above, Pan Xun's "Rural Heart" belongs to this group. This story narrates how the young carpenter, A Gui, has left his rural home where his father and brothers, all skilled carpenters, are encountering economic difficulty. In short, A Gui has run away from a potentially bad fate in the countryside, one which would be exacerbated by his father's intention to divide the family property so that the sons shoulder an equal share of the accumulated family debt.

Lu Xun cites the economic factor in connection with two other stories, Xu Qinwen's "My Father's Garden" (Fuqin de huayuan 父親的花園, 1923) and Wang Luyan's "Gold" (Huangjīn 黃金, 1927). He states: "What troubles Xu Qinwen is that he has lost his 'father's flower garden' on earth. What vexes [Wang Luyan] is that he has left paradise on earth." In the first story, the garden which was once flourishing is now a desolate ruin, and this ruin has been brought about by financial collapse. In "Gold," on the other hand, the protagonist Rushi Bobo was once a prosperous villager of Chensiqiao but today he is destitute, a situation which has been engendered by his son's failure to

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82 Liu Jixian 99.

83 The first of these is anthologized in Da xi, 4: 265-267, the second in XX, 1: 113-129.

84 Lu Xun, Introduction 10.

85 On the subject of Xu Qinwen's "Fuqin de huayuan," Lu Xun states the following:

Before [Xu Qinwen] started writing xiangu wenxue, he was forced to leave his native home, his livelihood compelling him to go to other places where he could only reminisce about the 'flower garden of his father.' Furthermore, it was a flower garden that no longer existed, because it is more restful and comforting to think about those things that no longer exist in one's old home than those which clearly exist but which are beyond one's grasp. (Lu Xun Introduction 9.)
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remit money home. These short stories are reminiscent of the decline in the fortunes of Lu Xun's own family which is related in "My Old Home." In brief, all three writers are concerned with the small producer and his bankruptcy which has been brought about by China's economic collapse.

In conclusion, this second group of xiangtu wenxue stories represents a shift away from the cultural determinism of Lu Xun to a positivist approach that is both historicist and phenomenological in its explanation of Chinese reality of the 1920s. This shift in the orientation of these writers signified the end of the "cultural-intellectualist" mode of thinking which had defined the Chinese category of thought since Kang Youwei and the beginning of a new mode which was epistemologically more advanced. One critic even maintains that the materialist orientation in these stories is an outgrowth of social progress and the development of knowledge which account for the difference of the characters in these xiangtu wenxue stories from Lu Xun's.86 A Gui and Yunyang, for instance, exhibit a greater ability to reason than Lu Xun's Ah Q or Runtu; they are thus not afflicted by the Chinese "spiritual disease" to the same degree as Lu Xun's characters.

The transition to the new orientation is very abrupt and is similar to the epistemological break which Michel Foucault theorizes marks the end of one epoch, discourse or "episteme"87 and ushers in a new one. This occurred, for instance, in Europe at the beginning of the classical age in the seventeenth century and the beginning of the modern age at the end of the eighteenth. Foucault is characterized as a philosopher of discontinuity; nonetheless, his breaks also emphasize the continuity between epistemes in

86 Li Yukun, "Jianlun ershi niandai de xiangtu wenxue" 61-62.
87 Michel Foucault's discourse is a conceptual terrain in which knowledge is formed and linked to the exercise of power. The forms of discourse ensure the reproduction of the social system through selection, exclusion and domination. Foucault writes of discourse as follows: "In every society, the production of discourse is controlled, organised, redistributed, by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its materiality." (See, Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," in Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader, ed. Robert Young [Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981]: 48-77.)
which certain cognitive processes are merely rearranged, thus allowing for a greater
understanding of reality. The new discursive mode in this set of xiāngtú wénxué
stories similarly does not represent a total change but is merely a new methodology through
which writers narrated Chinese reality. In the following discussion, I refer to this new
orientation as the positivist mode, as opposed to the cultural-intellectualist mode of Lu
Xun.

The positivism of the new mode also indicated that this mode was essentially a
Western one. The West intruded on the Chinese cultural scene one hundred and forty
years previously and set in motion a process of intellectual and cultural change which
accompanied China's move toward modernity. This intrusion resulted in the imposition of
the unequal treaty system and extraterritoriality and reduced China to a position of semi-
colonialism vis-a-vis the Western powers. The semi-colonialist context is reflected in the
modes of realism and romanticism of May Fourth which were inherited from nineteenth
century Europe and the Europeanized language of May Fourth. It is also apparent in the
scientism of xiāngtú wénxué's positivist mode.

Another important feature regarding this mode is the impact of Chinese nationalism.
Chinese nationalism was engendered as a direct response to the Western intrusion and
brought forth a new hierarchy of values, one of the most fundamental features of which is
the privileging of the nation over other values and beliefs. This privileging of the nation is
an important feature in the configuration of most of twentieth century Chinese literature, for
example, the devaluation of gender differences in Lu Xun's "New Year's Sacrifice," and it
remains a characteristic and enduring element of most forms of modern Chinese fiction.
The appropriation of Chinese literature by the Communist revolution with its emphasis on
the nation occurred naturally as a result of this privileging.

88 Karlis Racevskis, "Geneological Critique: Michel Foucault and the Systems of Thought," in G. Douglas
Atkins and Laura Morrow, eds., Contemporary Literary Theory (University of Massachusetts Press, 1989): 231.
One final point of discussion is the question of the relation of xiangtu wenxue to the Chinese Communist revolution and whether xiangtu wenxue exhibits the programmatic tendencies of Chinese revolutionary literature of the 1930s. I maintain, as I stated above, that this literature evinces little of a revolutionary ideology and that the characters in xiangtu wenxue also exhibit little revolutionary awareness of the environmental factors influencing their lives. Yunyang in "The Exhausted One," for instance, has little knowledge that his situation has been engendered by class oppression; he only knows that he should have an accumulated savings of two hundred yuan. A Gui also does not analyze his situation from the perspective of a Marxist concept, such as the contradiction between the country and the city. He merely evinces a vague awareness of the economic factors as a source of his woes. My conclusions regarding xiangtu wenxue are shared by the majority of Chinese critics in the secondary criticism, though for reasons different from mine. They aver that the writers of xiangtu wenxue "lament the misfortunes of the peasants" but only rarely display "anger at the [peasants'] failure to struggle." 89 Thus they echo Mao Dun's sentiment that xiangtu wenxue should evince a revolutionary zeal which would allow it to be classed as revolutionary literature. As I stated above, however, this is not possible. The critics also maintain that xiangtu wenxue exhibits certain deficiencies which arise from the fact that the xiangtu zuojia did not personally participate in the revolutionary struggles of the late 1920s and 1930s, and thus they lack depth of understanding.90 One critic maintains that, as "petty-bourgeois writers," their works are characterized by anxiety and depression, and thus they lack the idealism of the true proletarian writer.91 This argument is irrelevant, however, because with very few exceptions China to date has produced only very few "proletarian

89 Dai Guangzhong 68.
91 Ibid.
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writers.\textsuperscript{92} There is one critic, on the other hand, who maintains that Yunyang represents a move away from critical realism to the revolutionary realism form which accompanied the successes of the peasant movements in Kiangsi and Hunan.\textsuperscript{93} I do not agree with this position, however, as there is little to substantiate this in the literature. There is also little evidence to substantiate the assertion by one critic that Lu Xun was dissatisfied with the \textit{xiangtu zuojia} for their lack of revolutionary idealism.\textsuperscript{94} Lu Xun's rejection of politics and his denial of the concept of "revolutionary literature" is well-known.\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Xiangtu wenxue}, on the other hand, is somewhat akin to the popular art form envisioned by Qu Qiubai because it reflects a real side of society and hints at the direction that reform ought to

\textsuperscript{92} One such writer is Zhao Shuli 趙樹理 who is discussed in Chapter Four.

\textsuperscript{93} Xu Zhiying, \textit{Ni Tingling} 78.

Georg Lukacs defines the critical realist as follows:

\begin{quote}
The critical realist, following tradition, analyses the contradictions in the disintegrating old order and the emerging new order. But he does not only see them as contradictions in the outside world, he feels them to be contradictions within himself, though he tends again following tradition--to emphasize the contradictions rather than the forces working for reconciliation. (Georg Lukacs, \textit{The Meaning of Contemporary Realism} [London: Merlin Press, 1963]: 114, quoted from \textit{Contemporary Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Post-Mao Fiction and Poetry}, Michael S. Duke, ed. [New York/London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1984]: 4.)
\end{quote}

Revolutionary realism is usually referred to as socialist realism and is the literary form promoted by Mao Zedong in his \textit{Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art}. It was the only literary form deemed acceptable by the Chinese government between the years 1949 and 1979.

\textsuperscript{94} Dai Guangzhong is referring one of Lu Xun's \textit{zagan} in which he states that those works which "despised the old society, and ... had no ideals for the future" were not revolutionary works. (Lu Xun, \"Sanxianji: xiandai de xinwenxue de gaiguan,\" \textit{Lu Xun quanji}, 4: 134.) In fn 12 of his article, Dai Guangzong also quotes Li Jiye who recalls "He [Lu Xun] always detested reading works which left one feeling dispirited. He expressed this sentiment to us many times." According to Dai, Lu Xun was referring to the \textit{xiangtu zuojia} in this statement. (Dai 3.)

\textsuperscript{95} Lu Xun's sentiment on this topic was the subject of a speech given on December 21, 1927 in which he states that "revolutionary writers and revolutionists can be said to be two entirely different kinds of beings." (Lu Xun, \"Wenyi yu zhengzhi de qitu, Jiwaizi, Lu Xun quanji, 7: 118-119, quoted in Lin Yü-sheng, \"The Morality of Mind and the Immorality of Politics" 117.)
In this sense, too, *xiangtu wenxue* differs substantially from the majority of May Fourth literature.

In the following section I discuss the works of one particular *xiangtu zuojia*, Wang Luyan. Wang Luyan is a representative writer of this period; thus, an examination of his works can give us greater insight into the nativist mentality of these writers, not to mention their perspective on national events in the 1920s as they affected the Chinese countryside. Wang Luyan is also concerned with one aspect of Chinese society which had not yet become a common theme at this time but which became so in later periods of *xiangtu wenxue*, and that is the commercialization of Chinese society. The appearance of this theme is the central focus of Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* and would have continued as a central topic in Chinese *xiangtu wenxue* in the 1930s if this fiction had not been appropriated by the revolution.

In the decade of the 1930s, Wang Luyan was swept up by the communist revolution in the countryside just as many of his contemporaries were in the urban centre. His conversion to the revolutionary cause carried over into his writing, and he began writing revolutionary literature, as it is defined by Mao Dun. This development of Wang's dovetailed with the conversion of many other Chinese writers who also wrote about the revolution in the countryside, such as Mao Dun, Lao She, Ye Zi, Ye Shaojun, Ai Wu and Sha Ding, who, because of the peasant characterization and rural setting in their works can also be considered *xiangtu zuojia*. I conclude, however, that the strong contrast between the revolutionary subject matter of *xiangtu wenxue* in the 1930s and the purely nativist topics of the earlier period only further substantiates my claim that the *xiangtu wenxue* of the 1920s is not "revolutionary literature."

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96 Qu envisioned a "Proletarian May Fourth" as an alternative to the Europeanized May Fourth because the majority of May Fourth writers were regarded as foreigners by the people. His formulation consisted of three categories of revolutionary popular literature and art. (Pickowicz, 153-154.)
Wang Luyan (1901-1944)

Wang Luyan is in many ways a typical xiangtu zuojia though Lu Xun, for one, questions whether all the works of this writer fall into the xiangtu wenxue sub-genre. Wang's early works, that is, those written during the 1920s are without a doubt nativist in orientation: they describe local customs, the atmosphere of suffocation and stagnation in the villages and the struggles between the warlords and the landlords which are typical themes in the works by other writers of the 1920s. The only theme in Wang's works which is exceptional is the commercialization of Chinese society, which Wang was the only writer in this group to consider. In the period leading up to the war with Japan, Wang's works changed dramatically and he began writing stories about the revolution. I do not agree with Lu Xun that the politicization of themes in these works ipso facto precludes their classification as xiangtu wenxue. Even so, I discuss these particular works only briefly here.

Wang Luyan is classed as a xiangtu zuojia primarily because, like Lu Xun, he focuses on the local colour, natural scenery and customs of a region, in this case, Ningbo in Zhejiang province. Many of his short stories describe the farming villages of Jiangnan, the Jiangnan river scenes with wooden plank bridges and rice-grinding boats and the areas in Jiangdong.

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97 Lu Xun remarked: "In looking at the literary topics and style of one portion of Wang Luyan's works, it seems that he is also a xiangtu zuojia." (Lu Xun, Introduction, 4: 10.) The critic Hu Lingzhi also contends that many of Wang Luyan's works do not fall into the category of xiangtu wenxue. Lu Xun and Hu Lingzhi are probably referring to Wang's revolutionary works written after 1937. (Hu Lingzhi's arguments are found in his article "Wang Luyan yu xiangtu wenxue," Wenxue pinglun, 3 [1986]:139-140.)

98 My discussion of the revolutionary aspect of Chinese xiangtu wenxue will take place in a future study.
where the urban and the rural converge. Like Lu Xun, these nativist elements constitute the backdrop for the author's thematic concerns.

"Fishing" (Diao yu, 釣魚, n.d.) is a typically nativist story. The author has conflated his rural home with the memories of childhood in this work, as is the case in so much of xiangtu wenxue, starting with "My Old Home." In "Fishing," however this conflation is accompanied by the heroic, idyllic treatment of village life characteristic of Shen Congwen's works and contrasts strongly with the ironic presentation of other types of xiangtu wenxue. The heroic treatment in "Fishing," like the heroic mode in traditional Chinese literature, stems from the author's praise of China's farming situation.

The I-narrator in "Fishing" is a young boy at the beginning of the narrative who relates how he loved to go fishing in a river that ran past his home. The detailed description of the different types of sports fishermen grouped along the river embankment, the construction of the rods and baits and the different kinds of fish and shellfish and their habits evoke the memories, nostalgia and rusticity of China's "field and garden" poetic mode. The narrator relates that the river embankment is constructed of piles of rocks, leaving holes in which the shrimp and fish congregate. When the level of the river sinks in the summer, the water becomes very clear and one can see to the river bottom from the top of the embankment. In the morning sun, "even every hair of the shrimps' whiskers can be clearly discerned." Later, the narrator returns to visit his country home as an adult after spending a number of years in the city. Though he no longer engages in childhood pleasures, the narrator continues to hold a romanticized conception of his village.

The idyllic quality of "Fishing" contrasts strongly with Wang Luyan's works which indict rural realities. The posthumous marriage ceremony in "Marriage," for example, is

99 Shen, "Luyan de xiangtu xiaoshuo tanxi" 84.
100 Anthologized in Luyan xuanji 32-43.
101 Wang Luyan 33.
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patterned on the cultural iconocolasm of Lu Xun. In this story, the savagery and depraved nature of Ningbo rural customs trammel village life and reflect the need for social reform. "Marriage" is more discursive than "Fishing" which is augmented by the inclusion of irony in the text. This ironic technique invites the reader into an examination of the iconoclastic elements of this text, a technique which is absent in the more heroic "Fishing."

"Little Heart" (Xiaoxiao de xin, 小小的心 n.d.) recounts another kind of traditional Chinese custom, in this case, the sale of children which Wang Luyan contends was especially common in Fujian province. The free barter of children in which one or two hundred yuan could "purchase girls as bond-maids or boys as sons, to be used from a young age as slaves" arose from the primacy of the family in traditional China and from the demands of the Chinese patrilineal system.

Wang's emotional treatment of this issue, attributed to his concern for the fate of children, also stems from this author's antitraditional attitude and his rejection of traditional culture.

The "little heart" in the story refers to A Pin, a young boy whom the narrator befriends while he is working as an editor in Xiamen. The narrator inadvertently discovers that A Pin can speak a few words of his own native Ningpo dialect and becomes suspicious. He makes inquiries of the boy's father, a well-to-do engineer, when the latter comes to visit A Pin who is in the care of his maternal grandmother. A Pin's father subsequently terminates the relationship between these two, and the narrator uncovers the reason for this only when he is transferred to Quanzhou, Fujian, which is also the engineer's former place of employment. It

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102 Discourse assumes a speaker and a hearer. Discursive texts characterized by irony also guarantee more effectively the subjectivity of the reader who can participate in the construction of the meaning of the text. (Catherine Belsey, Critical Practice [London: Methuen, 1980]: 72, 79.)


104 Wang, "Little Heart" 388.
turns out that A Pin is from Ningbo but was abducted and sold to this engineer as a son. At the conclusion, the narrative strongly condemns the child slave trade popular in that region.

Wang Luyan’s other works of this period focus on the national conditions of China in 1920s, such as the conflicts between the warlords and the battles between the landlords which created social unrest. The is the theme of "Pomelo" (Youzi, 柚子 n.d.),105 Wang Luyan’s first creative effort. This story relates an execution that takes place during a battle between the Hunan warlords in the region of Changsha. The I-narrator, one of the spectators of the execution, describes the senseless crowds who trample each other down in order to get a view of the decapitation. The function of the pomelo as the central image in the story is clarified near the conclusion when the narrator and his buddies stop by a pomelo vendor’s stall to enjoy a post-execution snack. The cheap, sweet pomelos evoke a comparison for the narrator with the cheap value of Hunan peasant life. The story concludes with his remark, "Hunan pomelo ahh! (Just like) the head of the Hunanese! Ahh!!"106

Wang Luyan’s unique thematic contribution to this period of twentieth-century Chinese literature are his works about capitalism and the sociological change in the rural/urban interface engendered by the new productive forces. As a writer of realism, Wang acknowledged the entrance of capitalism into China, the change in social and economic relations and the effect that this had on human relations and psychology. Underlying these themes is the concern that the new materialism will gradually erode traditional Chinese culture.

"On the Bridge" (Qiaoshang, 橋 n.d.)107 is a story about the bankruptcy of a store owner, Uncle Yixin, due to the forces of mechanization. This piece opens with the arrival of the rice-grinding boat in Xuejia village, which Uncle Yixin watches with anticipation. The boat can hull rice faster and cheaper than the traditional way, and this takes business away

105 Anthologized in the collection Lu Yan xuanji 13-21.

106 Wang 21.

107 Anthologized in Luyan duanpian xiaoshuoji: 345-366.
from Yixin and his store. Out of desperation, Yixin adjusts his rate in order to remain on a par with that of the boat but ultimately he cannot compete. In the last analysis, Uncle Yixin's bankruptcy can be attributed both to his old-fashioned mode of operation and to external forces lying beyond his control.108

Wang Luyan's "Gold" is a more explicit example of commerce and its effects on human relations. This story attracted the attraction of Mao Dun who commented that, in contrast to Lu Xun's characters who are all from old China, Wang Luyan's have already begun to feel the effects of industrialism and commercialism.109 Mao Dun's position about capitalism is clear: he refers to it as the "destruction of the village economy by industrialized civilization". Mao Dun also remarked that "Gold" is one of the few stories of its time to describe village callousness and the psychology of the petty bourgeois.110

The protagonist in "Gold," as I mentioned earlier, was once a successful, respected man in his community of Chensiqiao, but today he is destitute. Rushi Bobo has retired from his job and has entrusted his son with the support of himself and of the other members of his family. The son remits money faithfully on a monthly basis until the twelfth month when the expected cheque fails to arrive. The village buzzes with rumours, and Rushi Bobo and his family become the butt of ridicule and derision, all of which is due to the loss of the customary remittance. Rushi Bobo is denied his usual seat of honour at a village banquet, their youngest daughter is bullied in school and the family's faithful dog, Laifa, is killed by a local hoodlum. The village's pettiness and hypocrisy is summed up by the eldest daughter who points out caustically: "If one has money, they come to you and respect you like a god. If you're poor,

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108 Mechanization and the gradual disappearance of traditional ways are the thematic subject matter of Lü Heruo's "Oxcart" (Niu che, 1935) which was written during the Japanese colonial period in Taiwan (1895-1945). This story is about an oxcart driver who finds he has become superannuated by the introduction of the mechanized pedicab into Taiwanese society.


110 Ibid.
they'll turn their backs on you and laugh coldly at you, ridicule you and insult you heartlessly
to no end." 你有錢了.他們都來了.對神似的恭敬你;你窮了.他們轉過背去.冷笑你.詆
謗你.盡力欺侮你.沒有一點人心.111  In brief, the unhappy denouement of this family is
attributed in part to the validation of money over other more traditional values in the new
monetary social system. The fact that this aspect of Chinese society is historically new could
be called into question; nonetheless, "Gold" represents one of the first few instances in which
this issue is treated as a theme in Chinese fiction. "Gold" ends with a dream in which Rushi
Bobo finally receives a huge remittance from his son, and the villagers flock to his house to
reverently kowtow.

The final phase of Wang Luyan's fiction in which he began writing revolutionary
literature coincided with the dramatic events in the Chinese countryside in the wake of the
KMT-CCP (1927) split. After the failure of the Chinese Communists to ignite a proletarian
revolution in the urban centres, they pursued an independent course in the countryside which
led to the peasant movements in Hunan and Kiangsi. Wang's works of this period reflect this
peasant revolutionary movement. If there is a trend toward revolutionary realism in his works
it is thus apparent only during this phase.

Wang Luyan continued to write during the onset of the war with Japan and into the first
years of the 1940s. Irony, which was the characteristic feature of Wang's xiangtu wenxue of
the 1920s, has been completely subsumed in these novels by the themes of foreign aggression,
class contradictions and the national struggle. The appearance of these themes was also a clear
sign that Wang Luyan had joined the ranks of China's leftist writers-- Jiang Guangci, Sha
Ding, Mao Dun, Wu Zuxiang and Ye Zi-- and had begun writing revolutionary literature
structured around Mao Dun's formula of the "struggle against fate." The themes of these other
writers, on the other hand-- the violence of Guomindang (KMT) politics, the deepening
impoverishment of the peasants and the peasants' organized class struggle-- indicated that

111 Wang Luyan 123.
Chinese revolutionary fiction of the 1930s was not entirely divorced from the earlier village themes of the 1920s, primarily because of the continued use of the rural setting and peasant characterization as props for the dramatic concerns of these works. On the basis of this link, in fact, one can conclude that the xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s contributed in many ways to the development of Chinese fiction of the 1930s, and that Chinese revolutionary fiction of the 1930s was a new form of expression derived from the xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s. This evolution parallels the dramatic fictional development of Wang Luyan and his shift over to the revolutionary camp. At the same time, xiangtu wenxue in other parts of China continued to exhibit the various modes of expression of the earlier period of xiangtu wenxue, such as the heroic mode of Shen Congwen which was established earlier in Wang Luyan's "Fishing" and the realist mode of Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue, concerned primarily with the themes of commercialism and industrialism and the erosion of traditional values, which were also established earlier in Wang Luyan's "On the Bridge" and "Gold." The reemergence of these modes and themes in later periods of xiangtu wenxue signified the continued vitality of the ruralist mode in the development of Chinese fiction. I discuss these themes and modes in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.
Taiwanese *Xiangtu wenxue* and the Legacy of Colonialism

E'en now, methinks, as pondering here I stand  
I see the rural virtues leave the land.  
- Oliver Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village"

But when amid such pleasing scenes I trace  
The poor laborious natives of the place,  
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,  
On their bare heads and dewy temples play;  
While some, with feeble heads and fainter hearts,  
Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts:  
Then shall I dare these real ills to hide  
In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?  
- George Crabbe, "The Village"

Taiwan, separated from China by the one hundred and fifty kilometers of the Taiwan Straits, also experienced a genesis of *xiangtu wenxue* in the decade of the 1920s. The circumstances surrounding the emergence of *xiangtu wenxue* in Taiwan, however, were quite different from those in China because Taiwan was a Japanese colony at this time, and the first forms of this literature were directed primarily at Japanese colonial rule.¹ Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* grew out of the vernacular period of Taiwan's New Literature Movement (*Taiwan xin wenxue yundong* 臺灣新文學運動) (1920-1937) which overlapped with Japan's liberal Taishō era (1912-1926). During this period, stories, poems and plays from the May Fourth period in China were introduced into Taiwan through the medium of journals such as *Taiwan minbao* 臺灣民報. This journal,

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¹ Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895 under the Treaty of Shimonoseki following China's defeat in the first Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895). The Japanese colonial government ruled Taiwan for fifty years until Japan was forced to renounce its colonies at the end of World War II.
aptly described as the "Taiwan version of the May Fourth Movement," reprinted works by Bing Xin, Lu Xun and Hu Shi, among whom Lu Xun was perhaps the most influential in the formation of Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* trend. This trend in Taiwan began with the realist works of the Taiwanese writer Lai He 麗鶴(1894-1943) -- the "Lu Xun of Taiwan" -- and continued with stories by Lü Heruo 呂赫若(1914-1947), Yang Kui 杨綺(1906-1985), Long Yingzong 龍瑛宗(1911- ) and Zhong Lihe 鍾理和(1915-1960). Lai He and his stories signified that Taiwanese fiction had made the transition to a socially-engaged literature, one devoted almost exclusively to exposing the excesses and oppression of Japanese colonial rule. With Lai He, too, *xiangtu wenxue* became the main literary trend in Taiwan during the period from 1926 to 1937.

The works by Taiwan's writers of *xiangtu wenxue* of the Japanese period are characterized by a discourse which is anti-colonialist and nationalistic. The peasant in these stories figures as a colonized subject, held in bondage by political and socioeconomic forces typical of colonial power in any subject country. This discourse led certain Taiwanese critics to place Taiwan among the ranks of nations referred to in Chinese as the "weak and small nations" (*ruoxiao minzu guojia* 弱小民國), specifically, the countries of Eastern Europe such as Poland and Hungary. These countries share a history of oppression and domination similar to Taiwan, and the peoples of these countries likewise struggled for freedom against this oppression. The themes of nationalism, patriotism, heroism, and the issues of national revolution and national

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3 This is the opinion of, for instance, Xu Nancun (pseudonym of Chen Yingzhen), "'Xiangtu wenxue' de mangdian," *Xiangtu wenxue taolunji* (hereafter abbreviated as *Taolunji*), Yu Tianzhong, ed., Yuanjing congkan 3 (Taipei: Yuanjing chuban shiyue gongsi, 1978): 95.
identity in the literature of these European countries rang a bell for intellectuals of China such as Zhou Zuoren who saw in them a means to awaken the Chinese masses into an awareness of China's plight in the first and second decades of this century. Zhou and other intellectuals were led by these themes in European literature to translate many of these works into Chinese for the purpose of making them available for the Chinese reading public and for "transforming society." Though only a few of these works were reprinted in Taiwan journals, the images of oppression, awakening and resistance in Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue can be traced derivatively to May Fourth realist fiction and to these translated European works. The nationalistic discourse in these works once again reflects the Chinese authorial tendency since May Fourth to privilege the nation above all other interests.

Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s is similar in many ways to its counterpart in China. The peasant and rural motifs in this fiction can be traced to Lu Xun's use of these motifs in his own writing, to his obsessive concerns with rural traditionalism and to his perception of Chinese village life as constituting the heart of Chinese traditionalism. More generally, these motifs in xiangtu wenxue also stem from the perception on the part of the Chinese intellectual of the village as a microcosm of Chinese social and political life. According to this view, everything that happens on the macro or national level--the dynamics of cultural and social life and the interactions of political and economic power--is telescopically played out in the arena of village life. In short, the village constitutes a mini configuration of national life. In Lai He's fiction, the setting of the village provides the stage for the fictional dramatization of the operations of colonial power, the recreation

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See Bonnie S. McDougall, The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China, 1919-1925 (Tokyo, 1971) for a more complete study of the translation and introduction of Western literature into China

5 For example, Alphonse Daudet's "La Dernier Class" and Guy deMaupassant's "Deux Amis" were reprinted in Taiwan minbao in May, 1923 and March, 1924, respectively.
of colonial systems of control and the colonization of the peasant as an imperial Japanese subject. The issues of national identity and the psychological processes involved in the colonization of the subject, on the other hand, are themes in the fiction of Long Yingzong and Yang Kui.

A final point to be mentioned concerning Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue is the absence of themes of Chinese cultural iconoclasm such as in Lu Xun's fiction and in the first group of Chinese xiangtu wenxue stories of the 1920s. The reasons for this lie in Taiwan's separate historical development as an island frontier on the periphery of the Chinese geocultural land mass. Chinese national and cultural forms and institutions came to Taiwan only during the period of the Qing prior to the island's cession to Japan. Its cultural development thus took place not just as a part of China but as a colony of Japan and, more recently, as the close "younger brother," metaphorically speaking, of the United States. In Taiwanese realist literature, which includes xiangtu wenxue, Taiwan's status and its relations with the Other, particularly Japan and the United States, is of greater concern than issues of culture per se. Accordingly, questions of colonial power and the Taiwanese national identity take precedence over issues of cultural iconoclasm.

One of the first major short stories of Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue is Lai He's "Steelyard" (Yi gan chengzi — 櫛植仔, 1926). This story features a vendor by the name of Qin Deshen and his encounter with a Japanese colonial policeman who represents the Japanese Other in this story. Qin has happily come into possession of a new steelyard

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6 Taiwan's exile literature, (by writers such as Yu Lihua or Bai Xianyong who write about life in the China Mainland prior to 1949 or about the Chinese living in exile in Taiwan or in the U.S.), Taiwanese modernism of the 1950s (see fn. 22) and Taiwan's current post-modernist fiction are more directly concerned with culture.

7 "Steelyard" was first printed in the February 14 and 21, 1926 issues of Taiwan minbao; it is currently anthologized in Yi gan chengzi: Guangfu qian Taiwan wenxue quanji, Ye Shitao, Zhong Zhaozheng, eds., Yuanjing congkan 126 (Taipei: Yuanjing, 1979), 1: 57-70. Unlike some of the other writers during this period, Lai He persisted in writing in Chinese, in spite of the difficulties this entailed in Japanese colonial Taiwan. His creative process underwent two phases: he first wrote in the classical language then translated this into the vernacular.
with clearly-inscribed markings, and he launches upon his new business feeling assured that the steelyard complies with the rigorous standards of the colonial-government in the realm of weights and measures. The Japanese colonial government was felt in all spheres of life in colonial Taiwan--all movement and conduct, the story relates "fell without exception into the realm of interference and prohibition by law." Thus, Qin is particularly anxious to comply with these regulations where his business interests are concerned. Later that same day, however, Qin still falls prey to the arbitrary practices of the Japanese colonial police which reinforce the irony and powerlessness of the colonized subject who attempts to circumvent colonial power. Qin is accused by the policeman of falsifying the markings on the steelyard and is fined three yuan. When he refuses to pay, he is sentenced to three days in jail. "Steelyard" concludes with the murder of a Japanese policeman and Qin Deshen's suicide. From a postscript which Lai He appends to the story, the author credits Anatole France's "Crainquebille" [1904] for inspiration in writing this story. The closely interlocking themes, that is, the intertextual nature of "Steelyard" and this earlier European short story reflects the influence of European literature on the growth of Taiwanese fiction.

Lü Heruo's "Oxcart" (Niu che ["Gyūsha" in the original Japanese], 1935) is also an account of a Taiwanese colonial subject and his ironic encounter with a Japanese policeman. The protagonist in this story, like Qin Deshen in "Steelyard," also symbolizes the oppressed colonial struggling against the autocratic, arbitrary practices of colonial rule.

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8 Lai He 61.
9 Lai He states: "Recently, I have had occasion to read Anatole Frances's 'Crainquebille,' and I came to realize that this type of incident is not confined to undeveloped countries only but can arise in any place where the power of force holds sway." (Lai 67-68.)

Anatole France's story is about a French costermonger by the name of Crainquebille who is fined by a French gendarme as he is selling his wares one day and is subsequently sent to prison.

10 Originally published in the Japanese journal Bungaku hyōron in 1935; currently anthologized in Niu che: Guangfu qian Taiwan wenxue quanji, 5: 5-43.
A second theme of "Oxcart" concerns the erosion of Taiwan's traditional culture through the island's modernization, specifically, industrialism, which was initially introduced into the island during the Japanese colonial period. The construction of Taiwan's comprehensive infrastructure and certain key industries is credited to the Japanese period; however, the Taiwanese also paid a heavy price for this early industrialization, such as uncontrolled urbanization and the deterioration of traditional values. These concerns were increasingly evoked by Taiwanese nativism, and in the decade of the 1960s the themes of industrialism and commercialism are the exclusive hallmark of Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue. This theme echoes Wang Luyan's fiction and the incipient nature of industrialism during the 1920s in China.

In "Oxcart," the carter Yang Tianding discovers that he is being slowly superannuated by the mechanized pedicab which has just been introduced into Taiwanese society along with other signs of industrialization. Yang increasingly finds that he is unable to compete with the faster-moving vehicles in the booming transport business, and, eventually, he coerces his wife into prostitution in a desperate attempt to avoid starvation. As the couple's domestic life deteriorates, Yang's hopelessness also deepens. Totally demoralized, Yang Tianding falls asleep on top of his oxcart one day. He is awakened by a Japanese policeman who fines him one dollar for violating this colonial

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The fact that the Japanese are credited with laying the foundations for Taiwan's post-war, juggernaut-like economy is not meant to discount the earlier efforts to modernize the island under the progressive administration of Liu Mingchuan during the Qing period. Liu governed Taiwan from 1885-1889, and during this time he reorganized the administration and fiscal systems of the island, rebuilt the coal mining industry, shipping, telecommunications and Taiwan's railway. (Samuel C. Chu, "Liu Ming-ch'uan and Modernization [sic] of Taiwan," Journal of Asian Studies 23:1 [November 1963]: 37-53.)
prohibition, that is, sitting on the cart, and, spurred on by his mounting desperation, he
steals a goose in order to pay the fine. The story closes with Yang and his goose fleeing
into the market place, hotly pursued by another Japanese policeman who, the reader
presumes, will present yet another jail sentence to this victim of colonial rule.

Taiwan’s relations with the Japanese Other are intensified in Long Yingzong’s
“Village of Papaya Trees” (Zhi you muguashu de xiao zhen 蘆有木瓜樹的小鎮,
1937),12 which deals primarily with the theme of national identity. The protagonist in
this story experiences an identity crisis as a result of adopting a Japanese lifestyle. Doing
this, he assumes, would make him privy to certain key advantages otherwise denied him
if he were to retain his Taiwanese nationality. Under the colonial-government’s policy of
gradual assimilation (zenka), the colonized Taiwanese were compelled to speak Japanese
and to take on Japanese surnames.13 The goal of this policy was to make the Taiwanese
into loyal Japanese subjects and thus worthy of membership in the Japanese empire. This
policy engendered an attitude of subservience on the part of the majority of the colonized
Taiwanese population, many of whom renounced the mores and manners associated with
their native nationality. This issue and the exaggerated depiction of the "despicable"
qualities associated with the Taiwanese nationality is the theme in this story by Long
Yingzong.

"Village of Papaya Trees" opens with the description of a little Taiwanese village.
The sole merit of this hot, filthy little town and its crowded, dark alleyways stinking with
urine and ravaged by termites is an abundance of tall, graceful papaya trees. The

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12 Originally published in the Japanese journal Kaizô in 1937; anthologized in Zhi you muguashu de xiao
zhen: Guangfu qian Taiwan wenxue quanjì, 7: 5-63.
13 This policy was adopted by the Japanese government in 1896 after considerable debate in the Japanese diet.
(See Chen Ching-chih, "The Evolution of Japanese Assimilation Policy in Colonial Taiwan," Paper
Presented at the XXVIII Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Toronto, Canada [March 19-
21, 1976] for a comprehensive account of the assimilation policy of the Japanese government in Taiwan.)
With the move toward Japanese militarism in the 1930s, the gradualist policy gave way to the
Imperialization or Japanization (Kominkå undo ) program which aimed to make the Taiwanese loyal subjects
of Japanese imperial rule.
inhabitants of this town are sunk in sloth and self-indulgence, which is exacerbated by the copious number of prostitutes in the town. In this environment, upward mobility is possible only through the adoption of a Japanese lifestyle, and it is toward this end that Chen Yousan devotes his life. Chen vows to study hard and to ascend upward through Taiwan's social ranks by way of the civil service examination. He wears only Japanese attire and speaks only Japanese, and thus he avoids identification with the Taiwanese who rank as the despicable natives in the colonial pecking order. Chen lists the "contemptible" qualities of the Taiwanese as follows:

They're a stingy crowd, lacking in cultivation, common and dirty, and aren't they his compatriots? Those old grannies with bound feet who bitch and curse and fix you with their furious stares, and all because of a dime; those crafty, wheedling businessmen who will go a lifetime without spending a penny but when it comes to a wedding or funeral will borrow money hand over fist in order to have a good time.....These people were like the worst kind of weed, grasping and multiplying in the sordid, uglier parts of existence.14

Isolated by his academic aspirations and mocked by his colleagues as a Don Quixote, Chen Yousan eventually undergoes a spiritual decline. Towards the conclusion of "The Village of Papaya Trees," he turns to drink and becomes infected by the inertia of the town. Gradually, by sinking to the level of bestiality characteristic of his compatriots, he "returns ...to his [Taiwanese] nationality." 還元於...同胞15

The last story I include in this discussion of Taiwanese colonial xiangtu wenxue is Yang Kui's "Paperboy" (Songbaofu 順報伕 ["Shinbun haitatsufu" in the original Japanese], 1932)16 This story most exemplifies the epithet of "literature of resistance"
which some Taiwanese critics use to refer to this period of Taiwanese literature. This holds true for "Paperboy" because this story is a rare account of a Taiwanese national who actually attempts to throw off the trammels of colonial rule. In this semi-autobiographical account, the young protagonist by the name of Yang comes to an understanding of the plight of his country under Japanese occupation while he is living as a worker-student in Japan. Eventually, he joins an underground resistance movement which is organized by a Japanese communist. The narrative process of Yang's politicization is intermingled with flashbacks which reveal the tragic events suffered by the boy's village back home in Taiwan. The narrative reveals that during the time of his father's generation, their village was destroyed by the Japanese sugar cartel's practice of land enclosure. The villagers lost their land and many were killed, including Yang's father. The village itself fell apart, and when Yang came of age he felt impelled to travel to Tokyo in order to chart a course for his future life. At the conclusion of "Paperboy," Yang returns to "Formosa," which was the island's name prior to Japanese rule. The narrative ends by concluding that, though beautiful on the exterior, Formosa is actually "rotten like a canker" with the poison of Japanese imperialism.

In the year 1937 war broke out with Japan following the Marco Polo Incident in China. In Taiwan, the Kōminka undō program (Imperialization of Subject Peoples) accompanied Japan's launch into militarization. This was, in effect, an intensification of the earlier assimilation policy designed to transform the Taiwanese into "loyal Japanese subjects" through the promotion of the Japanese language and other programs designed to inculcate loyalty to the Japanese state. (See Chen Ching-chih, "The Evolution of the Japanese Assimilation Policy in Colonial Taiwan.")
implemented in that year seriously curtailed the type of themes which had hitherto characterized *xiangtu wenxue*, not to mention other forms of dissatisfaction with Japanese colonial rule. In that year, too, the Chinese literary supplements of local newspapers and journals such as the *Taiwan minbao* were banned, making further publication in Chinese next to impossible. This period of Taiwanese literary and cultural development was brief; nonetheless, it was also sufficient to allow the Taiwanese to find their voice, to establish links with the social and literary movements of China and to construct a firm foundation for the later development of Taiwanese fiction. In sum, the tone and many of the issues articulated in the fiction of this period provided a model for Taiwan's subsequent literary development.

**Prelude to Modernity**

During the post-war period, after Japan relinquished Taiwan and its other colonies, Taiwanese literature developed in a number of different ways. In one way or another, however, all of this literature, including the *xiangtu wenxue* which reemerged in the 1960s, was associated with modernity.

Modernization came to Taiwan relatively early compared to other Chinese geocultural areas, and this is credited primarily to Japanese colonial rule. When the colonial period was over, Taiwan experienced a new period of economic growth under the patronage of the United States. Taiwan today has one of the highest per capita GNP rates in the world, a fact which cannot be overlooked when we examine the existing link between Taiwanese literary expression and the intimate, diverse effects of modernity on people's lives. The referential aspect of Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* allows for its classification as a type of Chinese realism.
Nativism Chap. Two

The referential aspect of Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue also differentiates this fiction from Taiwan's modernist literary discourse of the 1950s. Wang Tuo and other likeminded writers and critics disparaged the "wholesale Westernization" (quanpan xihua 全盤西化) of Taiwanese literature under Modernism (xiandaizhuyi 現代主義), the by-product, they maintained, of Taiwan's neocolonialist status under American patronage. This status, they felt, was to blame for the loss of national dignity, the erosion of native traditions and, most importantly, the importation of a "compradore" culture which had little connection with real life in Taiwan. Wang Tuo was one of the more vocal critics who advocated the death of Modernism and the regeneration of a more nativist discourse after the fashion of that already established during the Japanese period. A nativist discourse, Wang maintained, would more closely reflect the lives of the Taiwanese people. Wang's recommendation is as follows:

In order to put a stop to this trend of the blind Westernization of literature and scholarship, and in order to concern ourselves with the life of Taiwan's farmers and labourers, we advocate the development of our own national literature. We suggest that literature must be bound with the soil and with the people. This is the essential spirit of xiangtu wenxue.

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21 Modernism was introduced into Taiwan through the urban centre of Taipei; it was thus a result of Taiwan's increasing urbanization and urban-rural split. The term "Modernism" applies to a number of Western literary modes imported into Taiwan during the 1950s and early 1960s when Taiwan was culturally isolated and when US-Taiwan relations and cross-cultural exchange underwent an expansion. These "fashionable Western isms" or "the products of the depraved stage of Western capitalism" as they were designated by the critic Jiang Xun, were introduced "wholesale and compradore-like" into Taiwan via the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at National Taiwan University. (Jiang Xun 蒋勳 "Taiwan xieshi wenxuezhong xinqi de daode liliang," Introduction to Wang Tuo's Wang jun zao guei [Taipei: Yuanjing chubanshe, 1977]: ii.) Joseph S.M. Lau defines these isms as "symbolism, surrealism, existentialism, futurism, modernism, phenomenalism, etc." and elaborates that, having no idols of their own, the "disinherited Taiwanese writers" made use of these isms in order to create a tradition of their own. (Joseph S.M. Lau, "How Much Truth Can a Blade of Grass Carry?: Ch'en Ying-chen and the Emergence of Native Taiwanese Writers," Journal of Asian Studies, 4 [1973]: 623.)

22 Many of these sentiments intensified to fever pitch during the late 1970s. The xiangtu wenxue movement and debates (xiangtu wenxue zhenglun) of the years 1977-78 are discussed further in Chapter Five.

Taiwanese *xiangtu wenxue* did indeed evolve as the dominant trend in Taiwan throughout the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. Leo Ou-fan Lee affirms that in a comparison with modernism, with "its social and humanistic concerns, its realist mode, *xiangtu wenxue*] comes much closer to the tradition of modern Chinese fiction. At the same time, however, the development of *xiangtu wenxue* is in some measure still due to the fertile medium of Modernism.

Modernity initially came to Taiwan with its installation as an agricultural appendage to Japan in line with Japan's developmental policy. Through this policy, Japan acquired a cheap source of foodstuff with which to feed its rising industrial population and also an export surplus which could then be reinvested into the island. As a consequence of this policy, Taiwan was supplying Japan with between six to seven percent of its rice requirement by the end of the 1930s.

The most successful and profitable agricultural industry during Taiwan's colonial period was sugar. Sugar was an excellent means whereby Japan improved its unfavourable balance of trade, and at the turn of the century, Japan's imports of sugar exceeded its total exports by ten percent. The impact that this industry exerted on local life is graphically recounted in Yang Kui's "Paperboy." As this story pointed out, the control of the sugar industry by the Japanese cartel spelled exclusion for the Taiwanese.

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25 Wang Zhenhe and Chen Yingzhen, for example, were both graduates of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at National Taiwan University, yet both became writers of *xiangtu wenxue*.
27 Ibid.
29 Andrew Grajdanzev, *Formosa Today: An Analysis of Economic Development and Strategic Importance of Japan's Tropical Colony* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942) HRAF AD1, 003
In fact, Taiwanese participation in this industry was limited to that of cane-grower only.\(^{30}\) The sugar-producing parts of the island were divided into supply areas by government decree in 1905 which had the effect of making the sugar companies monopsonistic, and a few years later in 1909, the cartel, the Japanese Sugar Association, was formed.\(^{31}\) By exercising exclusive power to regulate prices, the Japanese not only earned great profits from their "hothouse industry"-- from twenty to forty percent of paid-up capital-- but through the confiscation of land, they also ultimately acquired ten percent of all Taiwanese farmland.\(^{32}\)

During the 1930s, Japanese capitalists on the island were motivated by Japan's war preparations to diversify Taiwan's economy. The objectives at this time were to produce manufactured goods previously imported from Japan and to supply industrial raw materials for Japan's heavy industry.\(^{33}\) As Japan's foreign policy became increasingly expansionist in the mid-1930s, Taiwan's economic relations became redirected toward south and southeast Asia. Taiwan, nicknamed the "stone aimed at the south," became viewed as a natural stepping-stone southward in Japan's construction of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The establishment of the Taiwan Electrical Company, the Japan Aluminum Company, the Taiwan Technological Society and the Taiwan Development Corporation all took place at this time.\(^{34}\)

The implementation and maintenance of Japan's economic policies in Taiwan were accompanied by a harsh system of social and political controls designed to wear down local resistance. The primary props of colonial power were the Bandit Suppression Ordinance, put in place at the outset of colonial rule, the baojia which was a traditionally

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\(^{30}\) Jack F. Williams, "Sugar: The Sweetener in Taiwan's Development" 231.

\(^{31}\) Ho, Economic Development 38.

\(^{32}\) Williams 234.

\(^{33}\) Ho, "Development Policy" 324.

Chinese rural community organization aligned along household groups for the preservation of peace and local control, and the posting of large numbers of police in the colony.\(^{35}\) While the *baojia* was a neighbourhood system of mutual spying, the police system was a heavy-handed measure designed to eliminate all residual forms of resistance left over from the initial period of the Japanese takeover.\(^{36}\) All of these policies—the policy of economic exclusion and the policies of social and political controls on the island, not to mention the fact that the colonized population also suffered a drop in real wages and a lower consumption of rice due to the high export of this product to Japan\(^{37}\)—constitute evidence that the native Taiwanese sustained heavy social and economic costs brought to them by the colonization of their island.

The Taiwanese population responded to the harsh colonial conditions with demands for reform. These demands were channelled through various social and political movements, whose existence was possible only due to the liberalized Taishō atmosphere.

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The *baojia* was reintroduced into Taiwan in 1898 under the Kodama-Gôtô administration, the fourth governor-general and his administrator who governed Taiwan from 1898 to 1906. Under this system as it was practised in colonial Taiwan approximately ten households joined together to form a unit called a *jia* and ten *jia* made up a *bao*. (Chen Ching-chih, "The Adaptation of the Pao-chia Systems in Taiwan, 1895-1915," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 34 (1975): 396.)

The police, called the "hands and feet of the governor-general," were so numerous that Taiwan came to be called a polizeistaat. (Shi Ming, *Taiwan ren sibai nianshi* [San Jose, Ca.: Pengdao wenhua gongsi, 1980]: 269.) Prior to 1925 there were one hundred policemen for every five hundred persons, and even in the late 1930s, this ratio was much higher than in Japan. (Chen Ching-chih, "The Police and Hokô Systems in Taiwan Under Japanese Administration (1895-1945)," *Papers on Japan* 4, ed. Albert Craig [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard East Asian Research Centre, 1976]: 154.) Mochiji Rokusaburō, who once served in the colonial-government in Taiwan, attributed the success of the colony to its development as a police state. (Mochini Rokusaburō, *Taiwan shokumin seisaku* [Tokyo: Fuzambo, 1912]: 67-68.)

\(^{36}\) At the outset of the Japanese Occupation, the local population waged a five-month war of resistance against the incoming colonizing forces which was followed by nine major anti-Japanese rebellions during the years 1907 and 1915. (See Harry H. Lamley, "The 1895 War of Resistance: Local Chinese Efforts Against a Foreign Power," in *Taiwan: Studies in Chinese Local History*, ed. Leonard H.D. Gordon, Occasional Papers of the East Asian Institute of Columbia University [New York: Columbia University Press, 1970]: 93-110.)

\(^{37}\) Ho, *Economic Development* 93, 96.
of the decade of the 1920s. These demands included a lobby for the repeal of Law 63,\(^{38}\) which would terminate the Bandit Suppression Ordinance and the *baojia*, and later became a movement to demand a separate legislature on Taiwan. The best-known of the social movements was the Taiwan Cultural Association whose mandate was to promote native culture on the island and which also attempted to carry out various types of social and educational reform. The Association struggled throughout its history with police harassment and arrests and ultimately became involved with the Taiwan Peasant Movement (1923-1932).\(^{39}\) The literature which emerged during this period was only one link in the entire social and political reform movements which characterized the Taiwan New Literature Movement. With the onset of the Pacific war and the reinstatement of military rule on Taiwan in 1937 these movements and Taiwanese-run journals were forced to disband. However, during the short time in which they existed, they unmistakably signalled the first stirrings of a national identity which, ironically, arose as the product of Japanese efforts to assimilate or "Japanize" the native population.\(^{40}\) This sense of identity gained in strength throughout the post-war decades.

In the post-war period when Taiwan was recovered from Japan, the island experienced considerable economic expansion under primarily American patronage. With the victory of the Chinese Communists in the mainland of China, the United States administration conceived of a need for a bastion against Communist expansion in the defense perimeter in the western Pacific. Taiwan, strategically located close to the Chinese mainland, was perfect for this role. Accordingly, during the years 1951 to 1965, the United States carried out a 1.4 billion dollar aid program whose aim was to establish

\(^{38}\) The governor-general ruled through a system of "delegated legislation" called Law 63 which granted him complete legislative powers on the island. (Edward Ch'en 482.)

\(^{39}\) Edward Ch'en 489.

\(^{40}\) Taiwan's situation strongly contrasts with Korea, also a Japanese colony at about this same time, where the feelings of nationalism and the sense of national identity were much stronger than in Taiwan.
strong military support on Taiwan.\textsuperscript{41} As a consequence, this aid abetted the process of economic development which had begun earlier in Taiwan under the Japanese.

By 1965 when American aid was terminated, Taiwan's economy had reached the "take-off" stage through rapid growth and the increased net domestic saving ratio.\textsuperscript{42} The island's economy henceforth assumed its present configuration of capitalist free enterprise based on foreign trade which advanced from an emphasis on food processing and textiles in the 1950s and 1960s to petrochemical and electronic goods in the 1970s and 1980s. Currently, Taiwan is a major world exporter.

Taiwan's political stability\textsuperscript{43} and economy attracted a large amount of overseas investment, particularly from the United States and Japan. Certain critics, however, such as Wang Tuo and Jiang Xun, objected to the neocolonialist and imperialist nature of Taiwan's relationship with these countries and referred to Taiwan's post-war decades as a "second colonial period."\textsuperscript{44} Anti-imperialist sentiment which was incipient during the Japanese period resurfaced in a strong groundswell in the late 1970s. This sentiment became increasingly xenophobic until everything that was associated with imperialist domination, such as capitalism, was denigrated and vilified.

In the 1960s, many members of the Taiwanese community, including Taiwan's writers of \textit{xiangtu wenxue}, had already begun to react strongly to the developmental process of Taiwan's social life and economy under Westernization. Taiwan had modernized to such a profound degree that industrialism and commercialism touched almost every facet of Taiwanese life; even the countryside, regarded as the last bastion of


\textsuperscript{43} The Nationalist government (GMD) instated martial law soon after its arrival in Taiwan in 1947, ostensibly for the purpose of quelling Communist subversion. In reality, however, Martial Law was intended to quash any potential opposition to Nationalist rule. The effect of Martial Law was to abrogate constitutional rights and also to create a stable political atmosphere conducive to overseas investment.

\textsuperscript{44} For example, Wang Tuo refers to Taiwan's "economic colonialism" under the U.S and Japan. (Wang Tuo, "Shi 'xiangshizhuyi' wenxue, bu shi 'xiangtu wenxue,'" in \textit{Taolunji}: 2293.)
traditional culture, was also affected by the new productive relations. Nonetheless, these writers still turned to the countryside and reproduced it metaphorically in their stories as the last sanctum against the encroachment of Westernization.\textsuperscript{45} The countryside, which was the one remaining place left relatively undefiled by the outside world, represents in this decade of \textit{xiangtu wenxue} an ideal, transcendent China extending far back into the roots of Chinese culture. The countryside in these works is the vision of the truth, wisdom and virtue, and the countryfolk, the only folk in present-day Taiwanese society who coexist with this vision.

It may be easier to understand the polarized urban-rural images in Taiwan's 1960s decade of \textit{xiangtu wenxue} if we compare this fiction with nineteenth-century British literature, much of which is also concerned with the diminishing English rural landscape and rural values in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. While Oliver Goldsmith was writing "The Deserted Village," for instance, the Industrial Revolution in England was transforming both city and country, creating urban poverty and bringing deterioration to the rural world.\textsuperscript{46} Throughout this time, however, and even while the English were predominantly urban-dwelling people, English attitudes toward the country persisted, so much so that even after English society was for the most part urban English literature remained predominantly rural.\textsuperscript{47}

Industrialism was the major factor determining English nostalgia toward country life. The destruction of the "timeless rhythm of agriculture and the seasons" and the death of the "organic community" of Old England are documented in Thomas Hardy's novels

\textsuperscript{45} The writers of Taiwan's \textit{xiangtu wenxue} were not the only writers in Taiwan concerned with the effects of industrialism and commercialism on Taiwan's traditional way of life. A strong anti-urban bias is evident in many other modern works of Taiwan literature. Sima Zhongyuan, Ya Xian, Luo Men, Qi Dengsheng, Xu Jiashi, and Zhang Jian also write about the erosion of traditional rural values, the environmental quality of life in the urban centres and the challenge of the West. (See James Chan, \textit{The Intellectual's Image of the City in Taiwan}, Papers of the East-West Population Institute, No. 68 [Honolulu, Hawaii: East-West Centre, May 1980].)


\textsuperscript{47} Ibid. 2.
which refer back to the period between the 1820s and 1870s, that is, to the period of the greatest rural change. William Cobbett, a writer of the English countryside who stayed in direct touch with the rural England of his time looked back, too, to the "happier," old England of his boyhood of the 1770s and 1780s. Cobbett was convinced that the decisive change in the villages of England had occurred during his lifetime. Oliver Goldsmith who spent his childhood in the Irish village of Lissoy also lamented the loss of the natural beauties of Lissoy and the warm-hearted manners of Lissoy's inhabitants.48

In the works of all these writers, precise historical reference to times past is lacking. Instead, what emerges is an idealization of feudal or post-feudal values which is then turned into a critique of industrialism. Raymond Williams calls this phenomenon "retrospective radicalism" and points out that the "rural-intellectual radicalism" in England was "genuinely and actively hostile to industrialism and capitalism; opposed to commercialism and to the exploitation of the environment; attached to country ways and feelings, the literature and the lore."49 What is held up for idealization by these radicalists is the "natural" or "moral economy" which served as the foundation for pastoral happiness and virtue in contrast to the ruthlessness of capitalism.

In England, the moral values traditionally ascribed to the urban and rural worlds were heightened by the rise of industrialism. The city, for instance, was satirized as early as the second century AD by Juvenal (c. 60-c. 160 A.D.), the Roman satirist. Faulted with the rise of the lawyer, merchant, pimp and procurer, the city, according to Juvenal, exudes the stink of place and profit and exhibits the danger and noise of crowds.50 The monied order of the city sinks its surplus capital back into the land, thus perpetuating the

48 At the time in which Goldsmith was writing, in 1770, the village of Lissoy had been destroyed by the enclosure of common land by big estates. This compelled the inhabitants to migrate to the towns or to emigrate.
49 Williams 36.
50 Ibid. 47.
exploiting processes. The country not only must support the city, but the interlocking relationship between the two dooms the country as a whole to be forever exploited by the city. Trotsky theorized that the history of capitalism has been the history of the victory of town over country. Engels also saw the modern city as a social and physical consequence of capitalism which, in the process, created the potential for ending capitalism through the rise of the urban proletariat. In England, those who were made landless by the enclosure movement became the working class of the new industrial towns and possessed the potential for revolution. In European fashion, these theorists also denigrated what they perceived as "rural idiocy," and extolled the bourgeoisie for rescuing both a part of the local population and the "barbarians" in the colonies from the "idiocy of rural life."

In conclusion, visions of modernity in Taiwan in the 1960s are neither unique nor new, given the quasi-archetypal, universal attachment to the rural world found in other times and places. This attachment echoes the sentiment of nostalgia for the countryside found among Chinese writers; it also echoes Lu Xun's "cherishing old ties"-- his deep bonds with the roots of Chinese culture located deep in the Chinese countryside. In short, Chinese traditional attitudes toward their culture and the conflation of Chinese culture with the rural world are ongoing motifs in modern Chinese and Taiwanese fiction.

Where Taiwan's writers of xiangtu wenxue part company with Lu Xun is in its valorization of traditional culture. During Lu Xun's time, writers did not yet have to deal with the vulnerability of Chinese culture in the face of the hard facts of modernity; thus they could afford to be iconoclastic. Unlike their earlier Chinese counterparts, Taiwan's writers of xiangtu wenxue had undergone at least one decade of rapid, intense industrialization. Caught squarely in the throes of modernity, these writers recognized the fragility of their country's traditions and embraced them, turning a blind eye to the rural bonds of oppression. The countryside for the writers of xiangtu wenxue was the "stronghold of 'Chinese consciousness'" which protected and nurtured the legacy of past
traditions. At the time I am writing this, however, this question is already in abeyance: many of the perilous issues the writers of xiangtu wenxue raised have disappeared in the progressive march of a Westernized time into Asia. For a remembrance of things past, one must turn to the fiction for the best record of a culture and a nation in transition.

Taiwanese writers of xiangtu wenxue of the 1960s

Compared to the English, the consciousness of the Taiwanese people has only recently emerged from a predominantly agrarian orientation. As a result, the newly-modernized urbanites of Taiwan-- those who moved to the cities to work in the factories or to start a business --still retain strong ties of identification with their places of origin, whether these are the farming villages of central and southern Taiwan or the fishing villages along the coastline. These urbanites return on a regular basis to their country homes to celebrate traditional festivals or merely to reaffirm their deep ties with the countryside in line with the centuries-old Chinese tradition. The country also represents their escape route from the angst, stress and Westernized lifestyle of the cities. From the perspective of sociology, the consciousness of the new Taiwanese urbanite reflects the rural-to-the-urban migration patterns common to all countries undergoing modernization and industrialization.

Like their fellow urbanites, Taiwan’s writers of xiangtu wenxue of the 1960s were also urban sojourners who retained a strong rural bias. As writers, they shared the same sojourning perspective as China’s xiangtu writers who wrote about their rural villages in the 1920s. Wang Tuo points out that a number of Taiwanese writers, such as himself, Hwang Chun-ming and Wang Zhenhe 王禎和 (1940-1988) all came from remote farming

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or fishing villages in Taiwan.\textsuperscript{52} Wang Tuo, for instance, comes from the fishing village of Badouzi in Keelong which is the setting of many of his stories; Hwang Chun-ming's home is located in Luodong, Yilan county; Wang Zhenhe's origin lies in Hualian; and another writer, Taiwan's "worker-writer" Yang Qingchu (1940-\textsuperscript{)), hails from a humble background in the remote area of Qigu Village in Tainan. These writers spent their childhood in Taiwan's rural villages and, after migrating to the capital, they began to write fiction about their old homes. At the same time, they also wrote about the situation of people who had migrated to the urban areas.\textsuperscript{53} Xiangtu wenxue is thus not merely "literature about the villages" (xiangcun wenxue 鄉村文學) but also consists of narratives about life in the cities and factories.\textsuperscript{54} It is for this reason that Taiwanese critics refer to xiangtu wenxue as "national literature" (minzu wenxue 民族文學).

In a passage which could also be applied to Taiwanese literature, Raymond Williams states of English literature that it celebrates the humble and worthy characters of the country setting in contrast to their wealthier counterparts in the city.\textsuperscript{55} He also states that the contrast of city and country provides the atmosphere of lamentation for past rural virtues which are irrevocably lost. Both these themes--the celebration of humble, rural characters and the sense of nostalgia over the loss of the rural world-- inform Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue. The world of the "little people" from the lower orders of Taiwan society is a world peopled by those who are either living out the last vestiges of a traditional lifestyle or who are attempting to contend with the onslaught of industrialism which is fast making their rural world a thing of the past. These are themes and concerns in the stories of Hwang Chun-ming.

\textsuperscript{52} Wang Tuo, "Xiangtu wenxue jiu shi Taiwan wenxue" 89.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Williams 72.
Hwang Chun-ming was among the first of Taiwan's native writers of the post-war period to begin writing xiangtu wenxue. After an earlier period in his writing career in which he wrote a number of "lightweight" stories, Hwang turned to writing rural works which are slice-of-life narratives about rural life and people. A portion of these short stories documents the changes to the rural areas engendered by the encroaching urban spread, and the effect that these changes had on Taiwan's rural lifestyle. Inherent in these changes is a moral dilemma based on the fact that there are certain material benefits which accompany the deterioration of traditional values. The question is, how do these benefits add up when weighed against the loss of a traditional lifestyle? Hwang's intention is not to solve this dilemma; he merely evokes it through irony and pathos. In short, this writer provides us less with a prescriptive answer than a descriptive, anecdotal account of what happens when change occurs to the deepest parts of Taiwan society. As a result, Hwang's works of this period of his writing have little didacticism, and they enjoy a wide, enthusiastic readership.

The changes that are depicted in Hwang Chun-ming's short stories are usually disruptive: they exercise adverse, even tragic effects on those involved, and they create situations of angst. Hwang Chun-ming is far from being a sentimental writer, however. On the contrary, he writes humorously and with a flair for storytelling. It is partially for this reason that he has been compared to the American southern writer William Faulkner and has earned the title of vox populi--the spokesperson of the "little people."  

Hwang resembles Faulkner in more ways than his provinciality, however. Faulkner wrote about an agricultural economy, life in the farms and villages of the

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56 Howard Goldblatt calls these stories "lightweight though not unappealing." (Goldblatt, "The Rural Stories of Hwang Chun-ming," in Chinese Fiction from Taiwan: 110.)
57 Ibid.
American south, the old-fashioned set of values that accompanied this life and its religion with its cult, creed and norms of conduct, and he contrasted all of this with the life in the great cities.58 Like other writers who are associated with a particular region, such as Thomas Hardy with Wessex, Faulkner used his regional difference as a vantage point from which to criticize the powerful metropolitan culture, especially its commercialism.59 Hwang resembles Faulkner in all of this, in particular, in his recognition of the erosion of traditional practices and attitudes in Taiwanese society as a result of the spread of urban culture. The element of nostalgia for Taiwan's vanishing traditional lifestyle runs like a subtext through Hwang Chun-ming's works.

Hwang Chun-ming was born in the township of Luodong in Yilan county. This little town is the place he knows best; thus, like Lu Xun, Wang Luyan, and other Chinese xiangtu writers who wrote about their old homes in the Chinese countryside, Hwang naturally sets many of his stories there. "The Gong" (Luo 1968) is one such story.60

In Luodong, according to Hwang Chun-ming's own accounts, there was a gong-beater who may or may not have been named Kam Kim-ah.61 Kam Kim-ah makes his entrance near the opening of "The Gong," lamenting his recent social and economic downgrading into near-obsolescence. Once the "only remaining practitioner of the unique profession of gong beating,"62 謝行筒市的打鐘的差事 Kam Kim-ah has been superannuated by the loudspeaker-equipped pedicab. This pedicab, like the pedicabs and

59 Ibid. 1, 2.
61 Hwang Chun-ming has stated "emphatically" on several occasions that such a person existed in his hometown. (Goldblatt 125.)
62 The romanization of the character's name in "The Gong" follows standard Hokkien.
trucks in "Oxcart," signifies that modernization has finally come to his little rural village. Announcements about lost children or temple festival days that Kam Kim-ah was once called upon to perform have now been taken over by a young man who pedals his motorized pedicab up and down the streets, making announcements louder and covering more ground faster. Kam Kim-ah despairs over his fate and attempts to wheedle his way into the good graces of another marginalized group-- the town's funeral mourners-- in order to recoup his livelihood. Never fully accepted by the group, Kam Kim-ah comes to near-grief over a scandal involving the local town lunatic and retreats in even greater anguish to the safety of his air-raid shelter. Soon after, Kam is called out of retirement by the District Headquarters and is instructed to make an announcement about taxes. Carried away by enthusiasm, Kam confuses the word "property" in his announcement about taxes with "propriety" and is promptly fired. "The Gong" concludes with pathos, heightening the existential wretchedness of this marginalized, forgotten figure.

Hwang Chun-ming is a more regional writer than, for instance, Lu Xun. By this I mean that he writes exclusively about a geographically small area. At the same time, many of Hwang's characters are as representational and as typically Chinese as Lu Xun's. Kam Kim-ah in many ways resembles A Q, that is, he too is a typical rural Everyman. He also has A Q's tendency to prevaricate, and his traits of self-deception and self-rationalization mirror A Q's dearth of self-knowledge. For example, at one point in the story Kam Kim-ah responds to an inquiry about the reason for his recent firing. He prevarications, hedges, and finally rationalizes that what he was announcing was "not good news so I just knocked off for a while." He then adds that he quit because "beating a gong doesn't interest me anymore." Like A Q, Kam Kim-ah also turns his defeats into moral victories. Sensing

63 Ibid. 73.
64 Ibid 76.
his rejection by the group of mourners, they become in his eyes "A bunch of old bums, lower than pigs" and, by implication, he is superior. As far as Taiwan's rural domain is concerned, Kam is typical of many rural Taiwanese. His typicality, however, stops short of Taiwan's westernized, urban population.

Like "The Gong," "Drowning of an Old Cat" (Nisi yizhi lao mao) also concerns the erosion of the traditional Chinese lifestyle through the encroachment of urban spread. The protagonist of this story, Uncle A Sheng (A Sheng Bo), is also a marginalized villager, in this case, one of a group of superannuated old-timers who pass their days in idle gossip beneath an old banyan tree beside the Temple of the Patriarch.

Up until now, the village of Clear Spring has been protected from the fads of the nearby urban centre, such as mini skirts and discos, by the intervening distance of two and one-half kilometers. What contact it has experienced has been in the form of the town's elite who help themselves to the healthful qualities of the village's natural spring. It soon emerges, however, that plans are afoot in the town to dig up Dragon Eye, the village's hallowed spot, and to construct a swimming pool for the use of the town's residents. A Sheng and the other oldtimers, such as Cow's Eye and Earthworm, are now witness to the beginning of the disintegration of their community.

Outraged, Uncle A Sheng decides to act. He begins to spout strange, cryptic riddles and, in his new role of village shaman, assumes supernatural powers that he believes can halt the construction. Notwithstanding his otherworldly performance, the construction proceeds as planned. Soon, children beg to be taken swimming, and revealing, two-piece bathing suits make their appearance in the village. It is apparent that the majority of the villagers have tuned in to the advantages offered by modernity.

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65 Ibid. 117.
66 "Drowning of an old Cat" is anthologized in Hwang Chun-ming, Xiao Guafu, Yuanjing congkan 11 (Yuanjing chubanshe, 1975) 17-39.
"The Drowning of an old Cat" concludes in ambiguity. Driven by the urge to protest, Uncle A Sheng jumps, stark naked, into the pool. But "a cat is not a dog," 貓不是狗⁶⁷ as the saying goes, and he is dead by the time he is pulled out. Like his previous megalomania, Uncle A Sheng's delusions about his powers can do little to halt modernity; in fact, they are as futile as the arm-waving of the mantis in the parable by Zhuangzi. Uncle A Sheng is driven to this act by anguish, the kind of primordial anguish rooted deep in the collective terror of the unknown. Ultimately, this anguish has compelled Uncle A Sheng and the other old-timers in the story to ask this one, overwhelming question: What will happen to all of us when the life we know now is gone?

Any discussion of modernity must concern the individual, specifically, the effects of alienation on the individual which arises during the process of the exchange of labour for money. In Marx's view, alienation arises when the social relations of production deny control over the means and ends of production to those who labour. The result is the thwarting of self-consciousness and damage to the purposive consciousness of those who labour.⁶⁸ In Marx's view, all forms of industrialism as we now know, transform human labour into a mere commodity whose utility lies in extracting a surplus value for those who own the means of production; thus, it exercises a dehumanizing and oppressive effect. Marx was concerned not only with the economic and philosophic implications of alienated labour, but also morally with its destructive effects on individuals and on the collective consciousness.⁶⁹ Marx's concepts are summed up as follows:

First, ... work is external to the worker, ... it is not part of his nature; and ..., consequently, he does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well-being, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies but

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⁶⁷ Hwang Chun-ming, "The Drowning of an Old Cat," in The Drowning of an Old Cat and Other Stories" 35.
⁶⁹ Ibid. 12.
is physically exhausted and mentally debased.... [Work] is not satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying other needs. Its alien character is clearly shown by the fact that as soon as there is no physical or other compulsion it is avoided like the plague.\textsuperscript{70}

The alienation of labour and the "damage to the purposive consciousness of those who labour" are the subjects of fictionalization in Hwang's "My Son's Big Doll" (Erzi de da wanou 兒子的大玩偶).\textsuperscript{71} As commercialism-industrialism intensified in Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s, the new relations of production penetrated as far as the small rural township. "My Son's Big Doll" relates the kind of alienation that the protagonist, Khun-chhiu, experiences when these new relations compel him to sell his labour as a "sandwich man" (guanggaode 廣告的). One critic comments that the work Khun-chhiu does provides him with "neither dignity nor personal satisfaction."\textsuperscript{72} However, the cause of Khun-chhiu's misery is not so much the type of work he does, which is indeed dehumanising, as its "alien character" which distances Khun-chhiu from himself and his environment.

"My Son's Big Doll" opens with the preamble that the sandwich man was a common sight in capitalist North America, and that this occupation one day also made its appearance in this remote part of Taiwan. The "adman"'s job consists in displaying two adboards, fore and aft, which advertise such products as Hundred Herb Tea, tapeworm drugs and movies. The adman, preposterously overdressed in a costume of a nineteenth-century European military officer, weaves his way through the byways of the town with his signboards, mechanically and mentally acting out the effects of his commodification. One of these takes form as the subjectivization of his visual perceptions along his way. A second is the regurgitation of recent experiences which the adman also attempts to

\textsuperscript{70} Karl Marx, \textit{Early Writings} [1844], 1963: 124-5, as quoted in Schwalbe 15.
\textsuperscript{71} Anthologized in Luo 33-62.
\textsuperscript{72} Howard Goldblatt, "The Rural Stories of Hwang Chun-ming," in \textit{Chinese Fiction from Taiwan}: 124.
subjectivize by replaying over and over his original role as participant in the event. His process of subjectivization is accompanied by a play of commentary which is recorded parenthetically in the text; these comments are thereby foregrounded and serve to defamiliarize and compel the reader into an examination of the adman's unusual condition. The result of all this narration is a pyrotechnic display of literary devices such as interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness in a flashback mode, all of which are devices inherited from Taiwan's period of Modernism.

Like the eye of a camera, Khun-chhiu records visual impressions as though they were cinematic effects and comments on them through a mode of simultaneous narration. Khun-chhiu's main preoccupation on his lonely journey, however, lies in the random regurgitation of recent events: a quarrel on separate occasions with his wife and uncle and dialogues with his boss. In one instance, a dialogue that took place between Khun-chhiu and his wife on the topic of their son, A-liong, is replayed in the narrative. As usual, Khun-chhiu makes his subjective and unvoiced comments in the present time on what happened. The narration relates this dialogue as follows:

Khun-chhiu was happy. This work allowed him to have A-liong; having A-liong gave him the patience to endure the work.

"Idiot! Do you think A-liong really likes you? Do you think this child is aware that such a person as the real you even exists?"

(At the time I nearly misunderstood what A-chu was saying.)

"When you go out in the morning, if he's not asleep, he's on my back and I've gone out washing. Most of the time when he's awake, you've got your make-up and costume on. When you come back in the evening, he's asleep again."

(If couldn't be! On the other hand, though, the child is getting more shy of strangers these days.)

73 "Defamiliarization" is a technique used by the Russian formalists to "estrange" the reader through the foregrounding of the linguistic utterance. By disrupting the ordinary modes of linguistic discourse, literature "makes strange" the world of everyday perception. (M.H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms 236.)

74 Hwang Chun-ming is credited with two film documentaries about Taiwanese festivals. The author's cinematic experience is probably the source for this narrative mode.

Gérard Genette defines simultaneous narration as the narrative in the present which is contemporaneous with the action. (Gérard Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, tr. Jane E. Lewin [Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980]: 217.)
"He likes your painted face and your clowning. Do I need say it? Your his big doll!"
(He he! I'm A-liong's big doll. Big doll?!?)

At this point, I temporarily take leave of the small parameters of Taiwan fiction and take the reader on another intertextual excursion, also to the world of nineteenth century French literature. In the works of Charles Pierre Baudelaire, there is a comparable figure to Hwang's adman who, while his occupation is different, reaps a similar arsenal of epistemological and sensory experiences as he strolls through the streets of his French town. This is the figure of the flaneur, or Ragpicker, who, half a century later, reappears as a leitmotif in the Arcades project of Walter Benjamin (1892-1940). Susan Sontag comments about Benjamin's flaneur that he is like a photographer or poet who indulges in a kind of pack-rat activity of collecting, cataloguing and internalizing everything that no one else wants. Sontag describes the flaneur as follows: "Everything that the big city threw away, everything it lost, everything it despised, everything it crushed underfoot, he catalogues and collects." While for Baudelaire, the flaneur is the man of the crowd, in Benjamin's Arcades, the flaneur merely aimlessly strolls through the crowds in the big cities, in studied contrast to their hurried, purposeful activity. As he does so, "things reveal themselves in their secret meaning," and he is privy to the meaning of the past. He is transfigured by the "angel of history" who both sees the ruin of the past and is propelled forward by history's progress. As he strolls through the streets of his town, the adman, too, is propelled forward by history. At the same time, his unique perspective

75 Hwang 51.
76 The Arcades project, which Walter Benjamin began in 1927, was the author's projected book about nineteenth-century Paris. This project centred on the investigation of historical forms of culture, proceeding from historical and literary texts (Baudelaire). The metropolitan topography is treated as if it were a revealing record of historical forces. (Peter Demetz, "Introduction," Walter Benjamin, Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989); xxxviii.
makes him aware of the "ruin" brought to Taiwan's social and economic life by the hurried launch into progress.

The flaneur knows the city; so, too, does the prostitute: the rise of the city and its labyrinthine character is closely linked with prostitution. As Benjamin puts it: "The labyrinth, whose image had passed into flesh and blood in the flaneur, is at the same time colourfully framed by prostitution."79 The adman in "My Son's Big Doll" is like the flaneur who picks his way through the labyrinthine streets of the town, collecting everything the town had "lost, despised and crushed underfoot," and as he does so he is also privy to the town's "first arcanum," as Benjamin refers to prostitution.80 In "My Son's Big Doll," the red-light district is beside Yuying Elementary School where the prostitutes, dressed in pyjamas and wooden clogs, are grouped about the roadside stalls, eating snacks. Some sit in doorways, applying cosmetics while others lean against the doorway or read comics. When the adman approaches, the serenity of the scene is shattered. The prostitutes attempt to lure him away from his perambulations, but the adman walks off, then laughs long and loud once he reaches the end of the alley. He then comments to himself in another one of those interpolated asides which so successfully foreground his thoughts: "Sure, I'd go. If I had the money, I'd go like a shot. I'd have the one from Fairy Happiness leaning against the doorway with that far-away look....."

In sum, Hwang Chun-ming's stories are about the underprivileged and marginalized of Taiwanese society-- the gong-beater, the adman, prostitutes and other outcasts. This "Faulkner of Taiwan" peopled his stories in the same way that the American writer created his Yoknapatawpha from the "yeoman farmers, sharecroppers and white trash" of the

80 Ibid.
81 Hwang 39.
American Old South. In the American literary tradition, Faulkner was alive to the comic possibilities of the poor white. But he also sympathized with them, recognizing in them an integrity, dignity and values which correspond little with their linguistic inadequacies. It was in this light that Hwang Chun-ming viewed his lower-class compatriots, recognizing in them traditional virtues which, historically, have always been ascribed to the Chinese lower classes. These virtues came to light again in the 1960s with the "discovery" of the Taiwanese people.

Wang Zhenhe

Wang Zhenhe's "Dowry--One Oxcart," (Jiazhuang yi niuche 袖 炊牛車, 1967) is also about a marginalized group which, in this case, has refused to make the adjustment to Taiwan's industrialized society. Wanfa the oxcart driver, his wife A Hao and the "Luganger," the garment merchant from Lugang, are ghetto figures who are not merely marginalized to the lowest ranks of society, they are also, in effect, society's castaways. Doomed forever as misfits, this trio represents the inevitable few who, thrown off by the wheels of social and economic change, are unable or unwilling to change their lifestyle to adjust to the changing times. Ghettoized by their dearth of skills, their unattractiveness and their existential isolation, they play out a little drama which combines all the elements of the theatre of the absurd. In short, this little drama is senseless, nonconsequential and ridiculous.

Wang Zhenhe delineates his characters with skill and compassion; at the same time he also satirizes and mocks them for, ultimately, their existential uselessness. As a satire, "Dowry--One Oxcart" is supremely ironic and is characterized by "bondage, frustration,

82 Brooks 11.
83 "Jiazhuang yi niuche" was first published in Wenxue jikan, 2 (April, 1967); it is currently anthologized in Wang Zhenhe, Jiazhuang yi niuche (Yuanjing congkan 13 (Taipei: Yuanjing chubanshe, 1975): 71-97.
[and] absurdity"84 typical of the ironic mode. One commentator classifies this text as low burlesque which he defines through a borrowed analogy of "squat, obese goblins" in the trick mirrors of the amusement park.85 This classification, however, fails to take the tragic elements of the drama into account; thus I prefer the stylistic comparison of "Dowry--One Oxcart" with the plays of Beckett. The utter meaninglessness of Wanfa and A Hao's existence results from their place in an alien, unkind universe which confers upon its inhabitants a life which is both anguished and absurd.

Near the beginning the narrative outlines the dramatic setting of "Dowry--One Oxcart" which consists of a hut bordering on a cemetery somewhere in rural Taiwan. This setting allows the three figures of the drama to carry on their tragicomic misadventures far from the intervention of the real world. Their residence is described as follows:

On the right-hand side of the little roadway leading to the cemetery stood a little grass hut: their home. It reminded one of an old man cringing out in the freezing cold, so shrunken and wizened it was! It was no lone wolf, however, as at a distance of about ten feet, there was a second, thatched hovel standing crookedly. A family had lived there at one time, but eventually they could no longer stomach the strange anomalies which defines the cemetery at night, and one year ago they had removed themselves to fairer climes: an area of regular people and things.86

As the narrative unfolds, it introduces the three characters, one by one. It turns out that all of them possess some deformity or defect which defines their ghettoized identity but which the narrator also uses to comic effect in the story. Wanfa suffers from deafness which resulted from an infection from dirty water during the war. His recourse at the

84 Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays 34.
86 Wang Zhenhe 74-75.
time to treatment by a gynecologist did little to alleviate his condition which became the
source for his nickname of "stinky deaf-ears" 臭耳郎. The narrative intimates that he
also suffers from impotence which ultimately leads to his cuckolding.

A Hao, on the other hand, is so thin that with "her hands placed on her hips she
resembled a pair of parentheses with a number inside. This number was only a single,
skinny '1,' however, there was nothing more curvaceous to make the heart race." 插在
腰上底雙手. 算數裏底小括弧. 括在弧內只是竿瘦底1字. 沒有加快心跳底曲折
數字87 A Hao's prize possession is a Western-style dress the colour of butter which was
the victory she had scored after attending church one day the previous year. This dress is
decorated with a fetter-like ornament which resembles a lock strung up on a tin-plate
chain, a decoration which is repeated across her lower abdomen. The sexual subtext of
the narrative is revealed by the narrator's ironic insinuation that these two locks "were
meant to form a blockade to defend the secret, private parts of her person!"要把秘密得
何等底那些要地封鎖起來！88

The coprological description extends next to the Luganger who is afflicted with
body odour. This affliction forces him to "scratch and scratch in the cavern of his armpit,
as though lice had taken up residence." 手又不住才進進肢窩深處. 彷佛有癆瘡居他
那裏89 The omniscient narrator shares Wanfa's discomfiture when he states: "They
must have defaulted on the rent for many years, and now the time had come to drive them
out! It was truly unbearable."長年不付租，下手擰趕吧！實亦忍無可忍90 The farce
does not stop here, however. The narrative continues to relate that the garment merchant
hails from Lugang, and the dialect of Taiwan's oldest port makes it sound as though "a

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87 Ibid. 75.
88 Ibid. 83.
89 Ibid. 77.
90 Ibid.
big steamed bun had been shoved into his mouth." 大饅頭被塞 住口裏 91 For poor deaf Wanfa, it was impossible to make out even one word of what the man was saying.

At one point, the Luganger moves in with his lover and Wanfa, and a family of vegetable picklers then moves into the vacated hut next door. To Wanfa, the nasal quality of the voice of the pickle-vendor sounds as though his mouth was "projecting into a pickle crock--Hwuuang!" 探入醃缸底口, 一字一個嗡 92 Wherever the pickle vendor went, he was invariably in command of a squadron of red-headed flies. With this description, the narrator comments in an ironic aside that "He who calls has nothing to offer but trouble." 言者不善，言者不救 93

The tragic aspects of "Dowry--One Oxcart"-- Wanfa's cuckolding by A Hao and the Luganger-- is highlighted by the presence of an all-seeing, all-knowing crowd which functions as a kind of Greek chorus in the story. The chorus is privy to all the details of the story and, like its Greek predecessor, passes judgement on them. All his life, Wanfa has wanted nothing more than his own oxcart, and, at last, he comes into possession of one. This cart is a gift, no more no less, from the Luganger in exchange for his wife. 94

After assenting to the exchange, Wanfa obligingly absents himself from the house for a few hours a day and makes his way to a local country eating-house to enjoy ligusticum duck and beer--his "Balm of Gilia", also paid for by the Luganger. "Dowry--One Oxcart" concludes with the jeering, carousing chorus of villagers who, having finished their meal in the eating-house, saunter outside and begin staring in. The pitiable figure of Wanfa, bent over his ligusticum soup, is the butt of their joke. The narrator relates the scene as follows:

91 Ibid.
92 Ibid. 93.
94 This exchange is the source in the story for the saying: "For a virgin bride--one box of cakes; for a twice-wedded hag--one oxcart!" (Wang 96) and also for the title of the story.
Several pairs of eyes fixed shamelessly on Wanfa. Then there was more talk and hilarity. It seemed as though they were saying that Wanfa's ass was growing on his head!  

Like Hwang Chun-ming, Wang Zhenhe is a regional writer. He writes about the stagnation of his community and the social effects of change. Wang's works are closely bound with the soil and the people; thus, they are nativist by virtue of the fact that they duplicate the mores, social customs and attitudes of Taiwan's rank and file. As such, they are a direct expression of the Taiwanese cultural locale. His works are also a typical example of the independent development of xiangtu wenxue from Taiwan's "compradore" literature. This, in a nutshell, sums up many of the works, the writers of Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue of the 1960s and their ethos.

**Chen Yingzhen**

Chen Yingzhen is another writer of xiangtu wenxue who wrote about rural change and the superannuation of cultural and social institutions which resulted from industrialism. "Family of Generals" (Jiangjun zu 將軍族, 1964), one of Chen Yingzhen's best-known short stories, is about this theme. "Family of Generals" falls into the first phase of Chen's writing career which lasted from 1959 to 1965 and which is characterized, in Chen's words, by a "Chekhovian"

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95 Ibid. 97.
96 This should not be confused with cultural separatism which Taiwanese political groups, especially those advocating independence, projected onto this literature a decade later. There is little political ideology in the 1960s decade of xiangtu wenxue. Even when Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue became more ideological in the late 1970s, there is little evidence to support the claim that this literature embraced a political viewpoint either for independence or for reunification.
The stories of this phase differ both from his "humorous" second phase and from his more ideological works of the 1970s and 1980s. "Family of Generals" represents Chen's period of experimentation with rural and urban themes prior to the author's political realignment.

The central theme of "Family of Generals" concerns a traditional Taiwanese institution-- the drum and gong funerary band-- which in current Taiwan reality has disappeared under the onslaught of industrialism. The manufacture of stereos and recorded music which began with Taiwan's shift to technology in the 1970s has gradually made this band obsolete, though at the time Chen wrote this story, it was in all likelihood still in existence as part of Taiwan's rural or suburban social life. Chen's fictional recreation of this band stems from nostalgia for a community which is fast disappearing and from a collective memory of a bygone life, which, when examined through the distorting, rosy lens of time, appears attractive and romantic. Chen Yingzhen's nostalgia for this bygone life, which is somehow better than the present life, is a replay of the nativist mentality we have examined already in "Oxcart" and "The Gong." The disappearance of this old institution in "Family of Generals," along with the customs and mores it represents, constitutes a xiangtu wenxue leitmotif.

The characters in "Family of Generals" are two members of the drum and gong band, nicknamed Triangle Face and Skinny Yatour. Triangle Face is a Mainland Chinese who came to Taiwan from China in 1949, and Skinny Yatour, a young Taiwanese girl.

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99 Ibid.
100 Chen Yingzhen was charged with sedition in 1968 in a secret military trial and sentenced to ten years in prison. This was the first leftist political case of post-1949 GMD-ruled Taiwan. This sentence was commuted at the death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975, at which time Chen was released along with the other members of the case. He had served seven years of his sentence. After his release from prison, Chen gathered his two stories into two collections and began writing fiction about the corporate world.
with a sordid family past. These two figures are drawn together from their equal positions of powerlessness--both are disenfranchised and both have little power to change their life. This equity defines not just their social disenfranchisement but also their gender relations--neither exhibits power over the other--and is maintained unchanged throughout their anguished life together. This is an unusual situation in the fiction of Chen Yingzhen in which women are usually represented as the victim of male power relations.\textsuperscript{101}

Chen Yingzhen is unusually sensitive about the ethnic mix on Taiwan where about fifteen percent of the population are Mainland Chinese.\textsuperscript{102} Often, he exhibits profound compassion for these exiles who, in a number of his works, are fictionalized empathetically alongside their Taiwanese compatriots. Certain critics have criticized Taiwanese \textit{xiangtu wenxue} for its regional emphasis; Chen's profound sympathy for the Mainland exiles, on the other hand, is the reason, according to one critic, that he is not a "bigoted regionalist."\textsuperscript{103} Though I would hesitate to label stories such as "Dowry--One Oxcart" "bigotry," the intermingling of Taiwanese and Mainlanders in Chen's fiction, minus the exile motif usually present in stories about ethnic Chinese in Taiwan, implies an expanded national focus and the blurring of cultural distinctions.

Triangle Face in "Family of Generals" is a trumpet player in his forties while Skinny Yatour, a young teenager, is the band's baton twirler. Both lead lonely lives and are isolated by their experience of personal misfortune. Triangle Face is entrapped by his memories of World War II, the Japanese, and a wife left behind in China; Skinny Yatour, for her part, is marginalized by her stigma as a one-time prostitute. Drawn together by

\textsuperscript{101} The representation of women in this way is the source for the sordid dynamics of Chen's "Night Freight" (\textit{Ye xing huoche}, 1979), for example, which is examined in a later chapter.
\textsuperscript{102} That is, those who came to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek in 1947 after the Nationalist defeat in China.
\textsuperscript{103} Yen Yuanshu, "Social Realism in Recent Chinese Fiction in Taiwan," \textit{Asian Culture Quarterly}, 4:2 (1976): 23.
misery, the two exchange whispered conversations at night through the partition wall of their sleeping quarters. Skinny Yatour informs Triangle Face over a number of occasions that she was sold into prostitution by her family and that she ran away from her owner. Her family must now sell their farmland in order to compensate him for his loss. Triangle Face offers her money with which to redeem herself from her family’s persecution but, misinterpreting his intentions, Skinny Yatour refuses. One day Triangle Face places his life savings under her pillow and leaves the band. Five years pass, at which time the pair is joyously reunited. With this reunion, “Family of Generals” draws to its surrealistic, modernistic conclusion.

When they meet, Triangle Face proposes marriage to Skinny Yatour. Skinny Yatour refuses, however, because she feels that her body is unclean and thus unfit for marriage. Triangle Face laments that “In this life it seems there is some force constantly propelling us toward tragedy, shame and defeat...,” adding that perhaps their union would be possible in their next lifetime. Yatour replies, "That’s right. Our next lifetime.... When that time comes, we’ll both be as clean and pure as new-born babes." The two get up from where they are seated and march stiff-legged along the dike, he whistling the "Procession of Kings," and she beating time with her baton. The next morning their bodies are found by some labourers:

Male and female were dressed in the uniform of the funeral band, their hands clasped primly on the front of their chests. A little horn and a conductor’s baton were placed very neat and straight at their feet, shining and glinting in the light. The two bodies lay there, tranquil and absurd, touched by a hint of sobriety.106

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105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
The source for the title of the story appears in the form of a brawny peasant who rides by on his bicycle at this moment. Seeing the couple lying stiffly on the ground, he comments: "The pair of them are lying there very straight and correct-- just like two mighty generals." 兩個人躺得直挺挺地, 規規矩矩, 就像兩位大將軍呢 107

The conclusion of "Family of Generals" is defined by its lack of closure, that is, there is no established meaning for these two mysterious deaths. This open-endedness allows not only for speculation on the part of the reader but also for the assigning of symbols or the reading of "signs" in order to explain the meaning of the text. According to one critic, Triangle Face and Skinny Yatour have committed a type of double suicide which, however, is accompanied by no visible mark of violence. 108 On the other hand, this segment in the text could also be read as a fantasy or dream sequence which has resulted from the author's personal intervention in the realization of his characters' desires. Ultimately, Triangle Face and Skinny Yatour are in a state of suspended animation; as such they symbolize the culture, ethos and consciousness of a life that is rightly past. They also signify that the past is never severed, and in some shape or form it continues into the present, to live on in the present and to remind us of the life that once was. This extension of the past into the present and the rural into the urban constitutes a vital set of dynamics typical of xiangtu wenxue. In Taiwan, in particular, these dynamics signify the recherche, retrospective nature of Taiwanese life of the 1960s.

In conclusion, Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue of the decade of the 1960s is defined by the themes of industrialism and the disappearance of traditional culture and norms which commenced with colonialism. The colonial legacy left its mark in the engendering and restructuring of social and cultural life which took place alongside the initial forms of

107 Ibid.
Nativism

industrialism. Many works of Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue deal with life in abeyance as these norms struggled for redefinition, first under colonialism, then under the tide of westernization. Time and again, characters such as Yang Tianding, A Sheng Bo, Kam Kim-ah and even the narrator in "Family of Generals" watched fearfully as the old life gently slipped away, and no one among them could predict what the new life would bring. With hindsight we could say that many of these changes were for the better; nonetheless, at the time the authors grieved over the loss to the life as they knew it, and reconstructed this life with a strong sentiment of nostalgia. The conflation of the past in these works with the rural world is an ongoing motif in the history of Chinese literature and signifies that no amount of urbanization will ever entirely eradicate the rural element in the contemporary Chinese consciousness.
Chapter Three

China's Regional Xiangtu wenxue

In his every movement I saw so many of his rural fellow-countrymen, all uneducated, but at the same time all so very good and honest. Time had uprooted the peace-loving soul of an old eastern race, and thrust it into a world of wars with which it had no empathy. Life had compromised itself, with a touch of melancholy and much restraint, in order to survive in this new world, but its dreams retained the lights and colours of a bygone world.

--Shen Congwen, "The Lamp"

Within the corpus of twentieth century Chinese fiction there is a type of xiangtu wenxue which is defined by its strong association with a particular geographic region. This regional xiangtu wenxue has already been discussed in connection with the works of Hwang Chun-ming; in China, however, it can also be found in the works of Lao She 老舍 (1899-1966) of Beijing, Shen Congwen of Hunan, Xiao Hong of China's Northeast, and many other Chinese writers to a greater or lesser degree. These writers can be considered regional writers because of their fidelity to the folklore, customs, dialect and history of their native place. At the same time, they are also xiangtu zuojia because they tend to celebrate "the poor as opposed to the rich, the declassé [sic] rather than the respectable, rural folk instead of urbanites." The roots of this type of characterization can be traced back to the movement to popularize literature during May Fourth which was a movement to create a national literature reflecting a broad base of interests. The interests invested in this type of "national literature" conflict only minimally with the sectionalism of a writer such as Shen Congwen or the regional and gender differences of a writer like Xiao

Hong.\textsuperscript{2} The reason for this lies in the fact that China's regional writers also use their regionalism to express universal concerns, such as the life of China's masses and the plight of the common person during a time of great national disunity. In sum, regional \textit{xiangtu wenxue} contributes in its own special way to the development of Chinese national literature, and this contribution is all the more valuable for its unique depiction of regional life.

Regionalism in Chinese history has existed in several guises: economically, the region has been linked with the administrative functioning of capital cities; politically, it has been associated with the Taiping Rebellion, cliquism and warlordism.\textsuperscript{3} Culturally, regionalism has always existed in China's south where resentment against the mandarinization of the north runs high, and in the hinterland where there has similarly been opposition to the "shanghaization" of Chinese culture from littoral China. Regionalism has also existed as a social force in China since the 1890s when imperialism was at a peak. Local initiative to rebuild the nation was popular among Chinese nationalists at that time and served to hold Chinese society together at the local level when all else failed. The major obstruction to regionalism is nationalism; however, for the Chinese nationalists, focus on and love for one's region did not necessarily invalidate love of nation.\textsuperscript{4} On the contrary, nationalism, like sectionalism, can foster regional pride. Finally, one might ask whether regions could serve as building blocks in the creation of a new China? The

\textsuperscript{2} The attempt to develop a Chinese "national literature" was closely linked with the concept of "dialect literature" or regional literature (\textit{fangyan wenxue} or \textit{difang wenxue}) during the folksong-collecting campaign. Zhou Zuoren, for one, stressed the relationship between an area and its arts and wrote that all the arts, not just \textit{xiangtu wenyi}, should be imbued with rural elements. (Zhou Zuoren, "Difang yu wenyi," in \textit{Tanlong ji} [Shanghai: Kaiming shuju, 1931]: 15.)


\textsuperscript{4} Jeffrey C. Kinkley 159
answer is certainly yes, except for the military regionalism associated with warlordism which was anathema to Chinese national unity.

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, the region was associated with cultural de-centralism, perhaps for the first time in Chinese history. This was a period of great disunity: China had grown dispirited, and regional identity became inseparably linked with the search for national self-identity. Chinese intellectuals turned away from the dead ritualism of Confucianism to the region, and especially the rural areas in the region, as the site in which to carry out a national revival. During the folklore movement, Zhou Zuoren, Gu Jiegang, Liu Bannong and Lu Xun studied Chinese regional folklore and beliefs with the goal of preserving the features of the region and finding a solution to China's national problems. Shen Congwen was also creatively inspired by this movement, and the reason he turned back to his native region of West Hunan (Xiangxi) was to search for the means for China's cultural revival. There in West Hunan, Shen unearthed a colourful and spiritually young cultural ethos which made the ritualism of Confucian China seem time-worn. In sum, the contribution of China's regional culture to China's national regeneration indicated that regionalism constituted a defining characteristic in the search for modern China.

Traditionally, certain works of literature have been associated with the region, for example, the Shijing is associated with the region around the Yellow River and the Chu ci with present-day Hunan. In the twentieth century, the concept of regional literature grew slowly due to the prevalence of nationalism which tended to subsume other interests. Writers such as Shen Congwen and Xiao Hong, however, eschewed the deep feelings of nationalism and national loyalty embraced by other intellectuals in favour of a deeper sense of loyalty to their region. Their feelings of nostalgia and their deep personal knowledge of

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5 Chang-tai Hung, Going to the People 45

6 Shen Congwen once remarked on the impoverishment of regionalism and local colour in the literature of his time. (Ling Yu, "Shen Congwen tan ziji de chuangzuo," Wenjiao ziliao jianbao, 112 [April, 1981]: 21-36.)
their locale rendered them disinclined to identify with larger national interests. The tendency to privilege the nation which is the pervasive characteristic of modern fiction and which is also a factor in the slow growth of regional literature is thus not so readily apparent in their writing. Only Shen Congwen, however, went so far as to express sectional feelings in his writing: in the main, the Chinese intellectual's training to value universal over particular concerns by and large tended to preclude this type of political sentiment. As the Chinese state becomes increasingly less centralized in the last decade of this millennium we may see more examples of regional literature.

The defining feature of Chinese regional literature lies in its documentation of the folklore, customs, dialect and history of a region. The use of local dialect was cultivated by both the abovementioned writers and those who had no strong regional orientation, such as Lu Xun. Dialect clashed with the ideal of linguistic unity promoted by the literary revolution of May Fourth; nonetheless, it was also the only available building block for a new national language besides foreign languages. China's regional writers were motivated to use dialect in their fiction either because of the inadequacies of the national vernacular or because of their desire to augment the regional associations of their works, though many of those who initially made extensive use of dialect for the latter reason also ultimately dropped it in order not to alienate their national readers. In short, the use of dialect to express or link a piece of literature with the local colour, the landscape, geography and customs of a region or locale is the ultimate determinant in cultural regionalism, and this is also where Chinese regional literature dovetails with xiangtu wenxue which has also always tended to use dialect.

7 The use of dialect in twentieth-century Chinese literature ranges from the exclusive to the sporadic. There are instances of regional literature from the area of Guangdong which is written exclusively in dialect. Writers such as Lao She, Shen Congwen and Lu Xun made moderate use of dialect, though Shen Congwen made less use of it as his works matured. Lu Xun also eventually eliminated all dialect from his work in order to maintain its national appeal.

8 The use of dialect in Chinese xiangtu wenxue was briefly discussed in Chapter One. Taiwanese xiangtu zuojia of different periods also tend to use dialect. During the years 1922-1937 of the New Literature Movement in Taiwan, the question of literature, the locale and dialect were the subject of a debate. Taiwanese
interests with those of the region at this juncture attests primarily to the universal quality of *xiangtu wenxue* as a fiction about the poor, the disempowered lower orders of the Chinese social classes and the rural. And this, in short is the defining attribute of Chinese regional *xiangtu wenxue*.

**The Regionalism of Shen Congwen**

Shen Congwen is known by his nickname of "Little Miaozi," an epithet which reveals his origins in the heart of West Hunan. His family was ethnically-mixed⁹ and belonged to the military gentry class which influenced the course of his professional career and the creative cast he gave to his ideas and sentiments. This family participated in the military rule of West Hunan, and Congwen himself decided at an early age to undertake a military career as his father and grandfather had done before him. His hatred of violence, however, which intensified with his exposure to the ideas of home rule and Social Darwinism washing into West Hunan with the other currents of May Fourth prompted him to leave the military several times throughout his life and, ultimately, to devote himself to writing and teaching. As a pacifist, Shen rejected both Communist and Nationalist solutions for China; his lifelong refusal to pay allegiance to any political ideology is reflected in the non-didactic nature of his writing, which is romantic and idealistic in his early works and pantheistic in his later ones. After 1949, Shen Congwen's steadfast

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⁹ Shen's mother was Tujia and his grandmother was a Miao. Shen himself was non-Han.
refusal to adopt the Communist cause led to his decision to lay aside writing and to devote himself to the research of China's material culture.

Shen Congwen's fiction is closely linked with his home in West Hunan and with West Hunan history. This latter point accounts for the description of his work as a "roman-fleuve" embodying a political apology for the cause of China's Southwest.\(^{10}\) Shen began to write about his region in the early 1920s after he left Hunan in 1922 and travelled first to Beijing and then to Shanghai. His early works of the 1920s, which comprise typical pieces of *xiangtu wenxue* about family life, fishing scenes, scenes at the market, local plants and animals and cuisine are all based on his childhood memories of Hunan. As we have seen, the use of childhood memories in the descriptive narration of one's native place is commonplace among Chinese and Taiwanese writers of *xiangtu wenxue*, and Shen Congwen was no exception to this. Later, however, Shen Congwen's works became more engaged, that is, they became tightly bound with the history and secularist sentiment of his region. Ultimately, West Hunan history served as the key link in Shen Congwen's evolution to a full regional writer.

West Hunan has a history of militarism and central Chinese colonialism which dates back to the Qing period. The Qing established frontier military outposts in the Miao uplands of Hunan where a town was founded in 1700 to govern the Miao of the Zhen Stream of the Yan plain.\(^{11}\) This town was called Zhen'gan (Congwen's native home, known as Fenghuang after 1913), and it became the focus of Han and Manchu power when the circuit taking in all of West Hunan was headquartered there in 1704.\(^{12}\) Seven thousand soldiers were quartered outside Zhen'gan's walls in order to pacify the Miao and Yuan River lowlands and neighbouring provinces.\(^{13}\) These soldiers symbolized the type


\(^{11}\) Ibid. 13.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
of imperial invasion and colonialism from littoral China which many of China's frontier
garrison towns experienced at one time or another. West Hunan's regional secularism
asserted itself in the Revolution of 1911 which took place in West Hunan as a kind of a
secret society revolt against the yamens of the Manchu circuit intendant and brigade
commander.\textsuperscript{14} To the West Hunan mind, the yamens were the symbols of imperial power
which thwarted their search for self-determination. The domination of West Hunan by the
central government was also reflected in the control of the local economy by merchants
flooding in from Jiangxi, Guangdong and Fujian. These merchants symbolized the advent
of commerce which Shen Congwen equated with the corrupting effects of the city and
"civilization," and which, in his view, brought depravity to West Hunan. Like many other
\textit{xiangtu zuojia}, Shen Congwen embraced a hatred for the city which for him was
represented by Shanghai and which his regional pride and prejudice caused him to view as
reactionary and compradorial. Shen also tended to link Shanghai with capitalism and
imperialism, biased publishers, the demeaned status of writers since May Fourth and the
self-serving interests of certain well-known writers.\textsuperscript{15} In sum, Shen Congwen's
regionalism and his attitude toward littoral China stem from a basic Hunanese fear of
domination by Jiangnan, and this fear is the primary ingredient fuelling West Hunanese
and other types of Chinese regionalism.

Besides its history of militarism and domination, West Hunan also possesses a
history of banditry, warlordism and violence which took place against the backdrop of the
civil war between the Nationalists and Communists. As China prepared for war with
Japan in the 1930s, more soldiers were sent into Hunan, and their presence intensified the
existing instability. Warlordism was at its height at the time Shen Congwen was writing,

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. 29.

\textsuperscript{15} Shen Congwen embraced a long-term dislike of Lu Xun whom he linked with the dominant culture of
Jiangnan. This changed only when, through the intermediary of Ding Ling, Lu Xun began to assist Shen
Congwen in the publication of his work. (Kinkley 82, 85.)
and one militarist after another conquered the area during the 1920s and 1930s with guns purchased through the revenues from opium. Ultimately, warlordism contributed to the development of a West Hunanese regional self-consciousness which culminated in its political autonomy. This autonomy, however, only lasted until 1935 at which time continuous violence and anarchy returned to West Hunan, earning for the region its reputation for barbarianism, banditry, dueling, ethnic uprisings and violence. This reputation has remained with Hunan today.

Shen Congwen's decision to write about his region was in part motivated by a desire to tell the true story about Hunan. He explained West Hunanese refractoriness by virtue of its oppression by outsiders, governmental and military forces, military suppression, ruthless taxation and economic exploitation, loss of legitimate leadership and rebellion against national (or provincial) attempts to integrate the region. His development as a regional writer began with a visit back to West Hunan during the years 1933-1934 after an absence of eleven years. This visit inspired him to embrace a pessimistic view of his home. Increasingly, Shen came to explore the rights and wrongs in the relationship between the Chinese region and the central power which he conceptualized as an oppressive one, and against this background, he also explored the fundamental problems of the Chinese state. A greater degree of sectionalism crept into his works during this period. Shen's writing evolved further with a second trip back to Hunan in 1937 when he began to write more exclusively about the regional decay characterizing his home province. Shen Congwen's full development as a regional writer at this time is comparable to Hwang Chun-ming. Both writers tended to depict their rural community in terms of its stagnation which was inflicted upon it by the outside world.

16 Kinkley 65.
17 This decision is recorded in Shen Congwen's Discursive Notes on a Trip Through Hunan (Xiang xing san jì, 1936).
18 Ibid. 134, 237.
Shen Congwen's obsession with West Hunan was not only historical but also cultural. The West Hunan region is the modern descendant of the ancient kingdom of Chu, and the vanishing nature of Chu culture and traditions was a vital source for Shen's creative vision, just as it similarly inspired more contemporary Hunanese writers. Chu thought is conceived in Shen Congwen's stories as a state of equality and harmonious social relations, though this concept can also be traced to other Chinese traditions which were precursors to Shen's art. In the main, however, Shen's fiction belongs to the eremetic tradition of Tao Yuanming— the "field and garden" poetic tradition— which accounts for his tendency to idealize.

Chu culture also provided Shen Congwen with other aspects of his writing, in particular, the subject matter of his romances. These romances are peopled by the Miao— the modern descendants of ancient Chu — and are structured around Miao customs, legends, lore and myths. They are filled with Miao singing masters, star-crossed lovers and all the sights and sounds of the Yuan River which Shen made use of to augment the regional flavour and eroticism of his works. More importantly, Shen borrowed the Miao cultural tradition for the purpose of casting aspersions on traditional Chinese culture and the moral basis of Confucianism. Shen Congwen believed that the old in China, by which he did not mean Confucianism but the type of culture associated with the Chu, could be the model upon which a new China could be constructed. This construction, he

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19 Shen Congwen's influence and the Chu history and culture found in Hunan province has inspired the writings of Gu Hua, Wang Zengqi and Han Shaogong. This is the subject matter of Jeffrey C. Kinkley's "Shen Congwen and the Romance of Chu Culture: Their Legacy in Chinese Literature of the 1980s," an unpublished conference paper given at a Harvard University Conference on "Contemporary Chinese Fiction and its Literary Antecedents" (May 11, 1991).

20 These other traditions include the utopianism of Tao Yuanming's "Taohuayuan" which was based on the image of a harmonious society of humans and nature; the ideal of peace and harmony separate from Confucianism found in the Huainanzi; and the Laozi with its idealized life of the xiaoguo kuamin which was projected onto a primitive society.

21 The type of eroticism found in Shen Congwen's writing reminds one of the extraordinary sensuality of Qu Yuan's Jiu ge which is descended from Chu cultural traditions.
believed, could also take place without fear of Westernization--the normal by-product of modernization. Accordingly, Shen Congwen depicted the Miao in an eternally youthful, pristine state, untrammelled by the type of repressed sexuality associated both with the stifling code of Confucianism and with Shen Congwen's own family background. In sum, Shen's attention to this psychological dimension of modern life, that is, sexuality, reflects his role as a new intellectual of May Fourth who has been exposed to readings in Freudianism and Western theories of abnormal psychology, and one who was also engaged in revolting against upper-class Chinese society and his own Confucian heritage.

Finally, the rural element is another important aspect of Shen Congwen's fiction. This element reflects Shen's reference to himself as a "countryman" (xiangxiaren 鄉下人), though this had little to do with his actual class standing. The walled settlements of West Hunan symbolically divide the Hunanese population into urban dwellers and those "in the country" which includes not just the Miao hillfolk but also all those who lived upstream from the larger cities of Changde and Changsha. In Shen Congwen's stories, the Miao tend the fields outside the city wall, run shops making beancurd and peddle buckwheat biscuits. The Miao, however, are only one of a number of disempowered character types from the lower orders of West Hunan's rich cultural mix as it is represented in Shen's stories. Others are soldiers, officers, boatmen, peasants, shopkeepers, stevedores, prostitutes, bandits and mill owners whom Shen came to know and understand during his peregrinations as a soldier through the interior of China during the years 1915-1922. Where Shen Congwen differs from other writers of xiangtu wenxue is his heroic representation of these types, especially the Miao, peasants and boatmen. This heroic representation contrasts strongly with the ironic mode which I discussed previously in connection with the representation of the Chinese peasants in China's xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s, and it led Shen to ascribe moral virtues to the peasants, such as dignity and self-

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22 Kinkley 14.
determination which are absent in the earlier fiction. More importantly, it also led him to characterize their life with ease, rusticity and loftiness. The ideology of the "happy farming family" (nongjia le 農家樂) in this type of characterization reflects his view of a "natural" economics of self-sufficiency, a concept which can also be found in the works of certain traditional Chinese poets and modern writers. In brief, Shen's paternalism—both as an intellectual of May Fourth and as a member of the gentry class—and his sentimentalism coloured his objective observation of peasant life. Had he observed the peasants more objectively, he would have found their lives to be filled with the miseries typical of Chinese peasant life. It goes without saying that these miseries would also have been exacerbated because of the national disunity of this period. This, if the reader recalls, was certainly the case in China's xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s. In conclusion, Shen's idealization of peasant life was closely linked with his rejection of his own cultural tradition and his discovery of another past cultural and psychological tradition which served to reinforce his intellectuals predispositions.

Shen Congwen's most nativist works are his early stories of the 1920s. As mentioned above, these stories were written while he was in Beijing and were based on his rural childhood memories. They reflect the influence of Lu Xun, especially "Village Opera," which, Shen maintains, was the first piece of fiction to show him how rural themes could be treated in literature. In brief, these pieces of xiangtu wenxue are extended local colour mood pieces in which he romanticizes country life and people.

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23 An example of this type of self-sufficiency is found in this line of verse from Wang Yucheng's "Yutian ci": "In the self-sufficiency of planting and harvesting, they know of neither Yao nor Shun." The reference to Yao and Shun presumably reflects the poverty of these two sage-kings. (The reference to Wang Yucheng is quoted from Xu Zhiying, Ni Tingting 73.)

24 The heroic mode characterizes the works of the short story writers Fei Ming and Feng Wenbing. The Chinese critic Dai Guangzhong maintains that this mode is adopted by a minority of xiangtu zuojia due to China's political climate at the time and the increasing influence of Lu Xun's realistic type of representation. He also maintains that these writers should not be blamed for their idealization which arises from the difficulties of the times and from the pressures of urban life. (Dai Guangzhong 66.) My argument against this is that this type of idealization results from Chinese paternalism.

24 Kinkley 85.
One of Shen Congwen's nostalgic reminiscences about his home is "Events Gone By" (Wang shi, n.d.). The setting is Fenghuang during a pestilence, and the narrator is the author's childhood persona by the name of Yun'er. Yun'er runs about wild, eating at will from roadside stands. Fearing that he or other members of the family will fall victim to the pestilence, Yun'er's mother loads him and his elder brother into a basket on Fourth Uncle's back, and the family makes the trek to Tongren in the Miao country. This little narrative differs stylistically from the other works of Chinese xiangtu wenxue written in the 1920s by virtue of the fact that the latter are often schematically structured around a simple image or set of images. There is no such image in this story by Shen Congwen; instead, the nativist elements of "Events Gone By" are provided by descriptive details of food, climate, flora and fauna, and superstitions. The narrator relates that when Yun'er and his family pass through the Tangtong Mountains, for instance, they take a rest by a little shrine erected to the tutelary god of the mountains. This is located under a tree whose branches are weighted down by stones, placed there by travelers in the belief that this will provide "relief from fatigue." This is the type of superstition which is typically found in xiangtu wenxue beginning from that of Lu Xun. After arriving in Tongren, Yun'er admires the large species of bamboo growing in the country, gathers fresh-water mussel shells and watches his uncle fish with the use of only a torch and a sickle. He also watches in awe as his Fifth Uncle operates the grist mill and as his cousins play in and about the bamboo water mill which lifts water for irrigation. In sum, "Events Gone By" is a typical nativist sketch, short in its execution and filled with nostalgic recollections of childhood life.

25 Anthologized in Shen Congwen wenji (Hong Kong: Huacheng chubanshe, 1982), 1: 5-9.

26 Shen 6.
Shen Congwen's "New Year's Congee" (Laba zhou 腊八粥, 1925)\(^{27}\) is another consummate, plot-less local-colour piece. The narrative commences by stating that no matter what age a child may be all of them love this type of sweet congee. The ingredients that go into the making of this holiday fare are: millet, lentils, dates, chestnuts, sugar and peanuts which are "boiled up all together in a mush." 腊八粥煮成一鍋\(^{28}\) The narrative states that "just watching the hissing and simmering and smelling the sweetness is enough to make the mouth water in anticipation." 單看它那噗嘶嘶熱, 聞聞那種香味, 就夠咽三口以上的唾液了\(^{29}\) Evening falls and the patience of Ba'er, the young boy in the narrative, is finally rewarded-- he is served up with a big bowl of the sticky mess. At this point, the topic of the piece switches with little apparent connection to that of the family Pekingese. The haba gou 哈叭狗, which the careful reader notices rhymes meaninglessly with laba zhou, is the subject of the second half of the story in which the dialogue of the adults confers little more than a phatic quality to the narrative-- as meaningless as the "sticky mess" of the la ba zhou. In short, "New Year's Congee" evinces Shen Congwen's special brand of word-play and, as a narration, describes a suspended moment in time of one day in the life of a Hunanese family.

Several of Shen Congwen's early pieces of xiangtu wenxue concern the Miao. The title of "Dai gou" (Dai gou 代狗, n.d.),\(^{30}\) for instance, is taken from a Miao term of endearment for a child. The boy, presumably a Miao in this short piece, is compelled by his father to steal firewood from the local hillside in order to support the father's drinking habit. The father muses over the pros and cons of the risks involved for his ten year-old son, who, he is convinced, is sufficiently clever to avoid getting into trouble. All this is

\(^{27}\) Anthologized in *Shen Congwen wenji*, 1: 23-27.

\(^{28}\) Shen 23.

\(^{29}\) Ibid 23.

\(^{30}\) Anthologized in *Shen Congwen wenji*, 1: 19-22. The term daigou along and other obscure usages of local dialect are explained by the author in annotated footnotes attached to the stories.
weighed against the greater difficulties posed for him if his son were arrested and he were he forced to procure a load of pine needles worth two hundred qian in order to obtain his release.

"At the Butcher's Block" (Tuzhuo bian, 1925) comprises a more colourful picture of the Miao tribespeople and all the goings-on in a West Hunan marketplace. What is of immediate interest is the description of a Miao countrywoman, which is only one of a number of such descriptions of women in Shen Congwen's fiction. Female characters-- in both dominant and secondary roles-- are represented in many of Shen's stories, and they are usually drawn in the same way: Madonna-like, passive and often victimized. Zhicheng's wife in "The Butcher's Block" is one such Madonna-like figure who occupies a secondary role in the story, in this case, she is in charge of receiving payment for her husband at the butcher block. This woman is described near the opening passage of the story:

Over the top of her starched cotton gown the colour of a fish's belly and which had just been washed she had tied a blue waistband. Her round face was lightly powdered and a pair of dangling gold hoop earrings hung down from her earlobes. The blue crepe silk turban on her head dipped down to her temples just above her eyebrows, and her blouse was brand-new. She had not forgotten to powder her neck as most women were wont to....

The image of the Miao woman in this description is based on the practice of sexual difference and the phallocentric practices in China's cultural system at large. In other words, it is based on concepts of female disempowerment. As such, this description is typical of the representation of female characters in xiangtu wenxue who are generally

31 Anthologized in Shen Congwen wenji, 2: 60-66.
32 Shen 60.
33 The notion of sexual difference first began with Sigmund Freud who based his theory on the visibility of difference, that is, it is the eye which decides what is true and what isn't. According to Freud, the female difference is perceived as an absence or negation of the male norm. (Toril Moi 132.)
disempowered. This image also reflects Shen Congwen's Han paternalism and his exoticization of the Miao which should be taken into consideration when reading Shen Congwen's fiction.

As stated above, Shen Congwen began to use West Hunan as a region in his fiction a few years after his early pieces of xiangtu wenxue. His regional fiction evinces Shen's attraction to the theories of Western mythologists and anthropologists to explain folklore motifs, and they also show his influence by Gu Jiegang and Zhou Zuoren and others involved in the folksong movement. These regional stories, which are all based on his memory, are about ordinary Han Chinese and Miao tribespeople, prostitutes, boatmen and peasants, not to mention women. Some of them, especially his Miao romances, could be termed fengtuhua or "portraits of local folkways" because of their inclusion of West Hunan legends, lore and history. These stories also serve as the backdrop for Shen Congwen's universal questions about life, sexuality and social and cultural change.

Shen Congwen is best known for his mythic, legendary romances about the Miao. The author had little first-hand knowledge or anthropological literature about tribal Miao; thus, to a certain extent, he was thrown back on his own resources in his creation of a Miao mythopoesis. A major mark of Miao culture in these romances are Miao mating songs which are full of exotic botanical metaphors and double entendres evoking more the spirit than the substance of the Miao formal mode of discourse. This discourse appears in Shen Congwen's novel Phoenix (Fengzi, 1933) in the form of three kinds of Miao songs but more particularly in his story "Long Zhu" (Long Zhu [name]).

34 Jeffrey C. Kinkley points out that the word "folkways" has also been applied to the stories of Wang Zengqi. (Kinkley, "Shen Congwen and the Romance of Chu Culture, fn. 40: 59.)

35 Kinkley 111.

36 Ibid. 151. This discourse, especially the exotic botanical metaphors, is also reminiscent of Qu Yuan's Li sao.
The latter is a well-known romance about Shen's Miao hero by that name. Long Zhu, as the legend goes, is the son of a chieftain of the White Ear tribe and a model of beauty and perfection comparable to the god Apollo, an image which is replaced by Buddha the Heavenly King in a revised version. This hero is a master of song with a "reputation for musicality and lyric inventiveness." His beauty and intelligence work against him, however, because these talents make women fear him, and this is a constant source of chagrin for this Miao hero. As it says in the story, "No woman can treat a god as an equal, or make feverish love to him, or shed tears and blood for him." Eventually, Long Zhu woos a princess with the help of his loyal dwarf slave who acts as a "vocal go-between." This dwarf, who is reminiscent of the "loyal slave" in Tang chuanqi, possesses singing powers that are not so impressive as to frighten women away, and Long Zhu eventually becomes the son-in-law of the chieftain of the Ox Palisade. The absurd, soap-opera ending of "Long Zhu" reinforces its mythic qualities.

The metaphorical mode of discourse and Miao tradition of legends and fables are the basis for other of Shen's romances, such as "Under the Moonlight" (Yuexia xiaojing, 月下小景 1932) whose theme centres around a notorious Miao sexual taboo. Nuoyou, the chieftain's twenty-one-year-old son, and his lover, a nameless young girl whom Nuoyou
compares to the "sisters of the Lady Fairy Ho,"\textsuperscript{42} are constrained from consummating their love by a traditional penalty: a tribal girl is forbidden to marry the man with whom she has lost her virginity. In full knowledge of the penalty, however, the couple one night "exchanged one soul for another" then sought freedom through the act of suicide.

The motif of double suicide is also the basis for "Meijin, Baozi and the White Kid" (Meijin, Baozi, yu na yang," 媚金, 豹子, 與那羊 1929)\textsuperscript{43} in which love is ignited through the Miao custom of alternative singing from facing hillsides. Meijin and Baozi agree to consummate their love in Treasure Cave but tragedy ensues when Baozi fails to keep the tryst. Instead, he spends most of the night searching for a pure white kid in exchange for the virginal blood of his lover, which is again a custom dictated by his tribe. By the time Baozi finally arrives at the cave, Meijin is breathing her last from a dagger wound she has inflicted upon herself in the belief that she has been forsaken. In true Romeo and Juliet fashion, Baozi then thrusts the bloody knife into his own breast and expires along with his true love.

In conclusion, I maintain that these Miao romances cannot properly be considered as xiangtu wenxue for the following two reasons: first, their structure is basically a mythic one whose epistemology about peasant life is propelled into an idealized, heroic sphere unlike most types of xiangtu wenxue which tend be more realistic. Second, they lack the two basic motifs which can found in any work of xiangtu wenxue: the anti-urban or anti-industrialism sentiments and the conceptual visions of the countryside. The primary contribution of these romances to a nativist tradition lies in the record they present of the life and colour of the West Hunan region and of the enduring customs of the Miao people.

Shen Congwen's non-mythic regional fiction include his "waterways" which are set against the sights and sounds of the Yuan River. "Baizi" (Baizi 芭子, 1928),\textsuperscript{44} for


\textsuperscript{43} Anthologized in Shen Congwen wenji, 2: 392-404.

\textsuperscript{44} Anthologized in Shen Congwen wenji, 2: 96-103.
instance, is a raunchy tale of a boatman who visits his sweetheart-hooker whenever his boat docks at Chenzhou port on the Yuan River. This story is full of unrestrained sexual imagery, the rough-and-tumble, seamy side of life on the river and the comraderie characterizing the relations between the prostitutes and their boatmen-clientele. In short, there is little of the prudery and sexual repression in "Baizi" which often characterize descriptions of Han sexual relations in Chinese fiction. At the same time, there is also no mention of emotional pain or of economic hardship in the lives of Shen's prostitutes which contrasts sharply with the descriptions of prostitutes in the works of Hwang Chun-ming. Shen's peasants and prostitutes are also free of any sign of disease, poverty, anxiety or oppression which were grist for the mill for the Chinese writers of xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s and Chinese writers of the 1930s; this lack ultimately called down onto Shen the criticism of the Chinese Communist Party. Other critics attribute Shen's pastoral visions to wish fulfillment, that is, to his desire to escape the dictates of Han Confucian propriety and to a yearning for a personal life beyond his grasp. This would also account for his romanticism and for the absence of class interests in his fiction. Whichever way Shen Congwen's works are read, it is clear that the wellsprings of his creative genius lay in something other than Communism or May Fourth-type leftism. Instead, Shen Congwen's creative wellsprings derive from nostalgia, sentimentalism and Han paternalism.

Besides "Baizi," prostitutes figure in other stories by Shen Congwen. Shen concedes that a fellow-townsman by the name of Zeng Qinxuan taught Shen a good deal of what he later put into his stories about prostitutes. These stories, however, are again

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45 Hwang Chung-ming's "The Sea-Watching Days" (Kan hai de rizi, 1967), for instance, is a painful account of a Taiwanese prostitute called Baimei who ultimately procures her "emancipation" through the birth of a child. See my discussion of this story in Rosemary Haddon, "Representation of Women in Chinese Fiction: The Female Body Subdued, Re(s)trained, (Dis)possessed," in Dawn H. Currie & Valerie Raoul, Anatomy of Gender (Ottawa; Carlton University Press, 1992): 81-96. A second story by Hwang Ch'un-ming entitled "Little Widow" (Xiao guafu, 1975) is a novella about prostitution in Taiwan during the time of the Viet Nam War. See Chapter Five for my discussion of this work.

46 Kinkley 61.
less realistic than those by Hwang Chun-ming; at the very least, they have a different focus from the vision of pain and suffering in Hwang's. "The Husband" (Zhangfu 丈夫 1930), for example, concerns a prostitute who works on a flower-boat on the river and who apparently enjoys her life of servitude. This woman has been sent from the countryside by her husband to labour as a prostitute. However, she evinces little awareness of herself as the object of gratification by male clients and also as the means of material enrichment for her husband. On the other contrary, she evokes the attributes of lack, exhibitionism and voyeurism inscribed into the subjects of cinematic narratives. Her description is as follows: "Her great pile of gleaming hair, her fine eyebrows artificially plucked with a pair of small forceps, the white powder and scarlet paint on her face, her city manners and city dress-- all these things confuse the husband who comes from the country."48

Besides prostitutes, Shen Congwen also wrote a number of stories about soldiers and others engaged in some aspect of army life. These stories were based on his own life experiences and are set in a pastoral community on the edges of the encroaching urban materialism. "Huiming" (Huiming [name] 會明 1929), for instance, is a story about an unattached, lonely army cook of this name who dreams of one day being able to live in the forests in the Western frontier. In the meantime, he finds great pleasure and a transcendent contentment in his simple occupation of raising a hen and twenty chicks. "Three Men and One Woman" (San ge nanren he yige nüren 三個男人和一個女人 1930), on the other hand, is about a sergeant-- a Shen Congwen personna who confesses as he narrates the story that he has since left army life and gone to the city which he finds equally unsuited to

47 Anthologized in Shen Congwen wenji, 5: 2-22.
49 Anthologized in Shen Congwen wenji, 3: 269-281.
50 Anthologized in Shen Congwen wenji, 6: 25-49.
him—and a bugler who befriended the young proprietor of a beancurd shop. The narrator relates that these three men are all secretly in love with the fifteen-year-old daughter of a gentry family who lives across the street. The young girl is engaged to be married but she soon thereafter commits suicide. Her corpse is subsequently exhumed and is found naked and decorated with wild blue chrysanthemums in a cave half a li from her grave. The bugler, who was the first to discover these irregularities, informs the sergeant who subsequently becomes convinced that this crime has been perpetrated by the young shop proprietor. Presumably driven by grief and lust, the proprietor consummated his passion on the dead girl's body. The conclusion to this strange tale could be explained by the Chinese love of guai—the divine or bizarre which figures in traditional chuanqi.

Nonetheless, the nativist elements of this story—the disempowered characters, the bucolic setting and the anti-urban sentiment—also provide a frame for this woman's fate whose gendered difference renders her a victim. This, in short, is also the way other women are represented in Shen Congwen's fiction.

Shen's most memorable army character is the retired soldier who acts as cook, steward and house-manager for the Shen persona in "The Lamp" (Deng, 1929). More so than in "Three Men and One Woman," the dynamics of this story arise from the contradictions between city and country life and the I-narrator's dislike of the urban centre. The I-narrator is a "village product" who is alienated in his current teaching environment. He laments, "This world was not mine. Weary of city life, and weary of life itself, I felt driven to think of leaving all these amenities behind...," and at night he dreams of the tiny country villages from which he had become psychologically distanced due to his

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51 The motive for this act is complicated by a superstition, originally related by the bugler, that a woman who had committed suicide by swallowing gold could be brought back to life if she were loved by a man within seven days of her death.

52 Anthologized in Shen Congwen wenji, 5: 23-45.

commitments in the city. The narrator's nostalgia is projected onto the figure of his steward in whom he recognized "so many of his rural fellow-countrymen, all uneducated, but at the same time all so very good and honest." This soldier typifies Shen Congwen's tendency to ascribe heroic and moral virtues to China's villagers and his valorization of rural life. The past is also valorized in this story: the I-narrator notes that the current period is a time of war; thus, they all dream of the world gone by. This bygone world, conflated with the idealized rural world existing now only as a dream in the new, urban environment, is a leitmotif we have encountered in other instances of xiangtu wenxue.

The heroic attributes Shen ascribes to the steward in "The Lamp" are reminiscent of Shen's portrait of Guisheng, a peasant in the story by the same name ("Guisheng", 1937), who is similarly lauded as "simple, honest and strong." Guisheng is an irregular farm labourer who minds two hills planted with wood-oil trees. Sincere, upright, loyal, thrifty and big-hearted, Guisheng epitomizes Shen Congwen's idealized conceptions of the peasant. At the same time, his stubbornness, his traditionalist, superstitious mode of thought and his unquestioning acceptance of fate-- all reminiscent of Runtu-- are rooted in China's outmoded, traditional belief system which Shen depicted in much the same kind of reformist light as many of his more leftist contemporaries. Shen's depiction of this other side of this rural character signifies that, aside from his tendency to romanticize, Shen Congwen also had an understanding of the dark side of the Chinese rural mentality.

Guisheng, according to the storyline, is attracted to the daughter of a one-time pedlar who has since become the proprietor of a local general store. Unfortunately, Guisheng also subscribes to the superstition that a girl such as Golden Phoenix who possesses "a

54 Ibid. 240.
pink and white face, long eyebrows and eyes that slanted upwards was believed to be
under a jinx, and he shrinks back from asking for her hand in marriage. The stage is
now set for tragedy: Guisheng's hesitation allows Fifth Master, the representative of the
local landholding elite who is similarly superstitious, to spirit Golden Phoenix away as his
concubine. (Fifth Master believes that taking a concubine will change his bad luck at
gambling.) Following this, the inauspicious mingling of Guisheng's zodiacal sign (the
tiger) with that of Golden Phoenix (the squirrel) bars him from attending the wedding, and
this, the reader is led to surmise, foments his desire for revenge. In the meantime,
Guisheng constantly reminds himself that everything is preordained by fate: it is fate that
decrees Fifth Master's fancy for the girl. Furthermore, that her father agreed to this
marriage was also put down to "fate." This attitude is reinforced in the text which
pronounces, "It's fate that decides everything-- not men." This irrational conviction
stands in the way of Guisheng's understanding that his traditional mode of thinking, not to
mention the local power-brokers, are thwarting his happiness. His "revenge," which is
Quixotic and misdirected, takes place in his arson of the farm labourer's cottage and the
store by the bridge, and finally, in his own suicide. In sum, the tragic outcome of this
story is one expression of the dark, destructive aspects of rural China; this outcome also
makes "Guisheng" unique in Shen Congwen's corpus.

Shen Congwen wrote a couple of stories in which women play a dominant dramatic
role. These women are portrayed in such a way that they are the object of the reader's (and
the narrator's) admiration and compassion, more so than the young girl in "Three Men and
One Woman" whose death is not explained in a way that is satisfactory to the reader.
Compared to Shen's romances, there is a greater degree of realism in these stories which
makes them more typical of xiangtu wenxue; the women in them are also correspondingly

56 Ibid. 162.
57 Ibid. 173.
less idealized. In both these stories, the women's victimization arises solely from their
gendered difference; thus, the narrative structure defers to, rather than violates, the
women's "textual difference." "Xiaoxiao" (Xiaoxiao [name] 蕭蕭, 1930), 58 the first of
these stories, is about the marriage, rape by a farm-hand, pregnancy, abandonment and
near-murder by drowning of a young child-bride which arises from Chinese traditional
misogyny and from Xiaoxiao's absolute powerlessness within her in-law family. The
rural custom of purchasing a child-bride-- a dark aspect of Chinese traditional culture--
provides the nativist framework for this story and is the source of the girl's oppression.
"Xiaoxiao" is an empathetic portrayal of the oppression of Chinese woman; it is also a
harsh condemnation of Chinese traditional culture.

Sansan in the story of the same name ("Sansan" 桑桑, 1931), 59 on the other hand,
deals more effectively with her gendered oppression. This is due, in part, from the
strength of her character and, in part, from her status as a millwright's daughter. Sansan
and her mother are intimately surrounded by the class society and come into daily contact
with the great social divide above them. The powerholding class in this story is made up
of rural landholders closely allied with the city, and, like those in "Guisheng," these
landholders provide no effective leadership in fending off the decadent ways of the city.
The invasion of city ways is epitomized in "Sansan" by a young opium addict from the
urban centre who has moved in with a rural "lord" ostensibly to recuperate. However, he
soon commodifies Sansan as "pigtail merchandise" and seeks to take her as his wife.

The city motif continues in another dimension in the story-- in Sansan and her
mother's daydreams. The narrative relates: "All day long mother and daughter spoke about
the city, which they had never visited; and they imagined that the city was full of people

58 Anthologized in Shen Congwen wenji, 6: 220-35. This story was the basis for "The Girl from Hunan," one
of a number of movies called "Fifth Generation" films in Chinese.

like the woman in white and the man with the white face...."\textsuperscript{60} At the same time, these women are intuitively wary about urban life and keep a firm grasp on the surpluses of their labour, refusing to cash them in for city silver or for a generally sought-after urban lifestyle. In conclusion, Sansan is aware of both the gender and social dynamics which intimately affect her life, and she fights a daily war to fend off these threats to her autonomy. Ultimately, she and her mother manage to maintain their rural innocence.

Shen Congwen's other stories about women, including some of his novels, concern an issue which is related more directly with Shen Congwen's own life: love and its many problematics. One critic points out that on the basis of recent research, it is possible to speculate that Shen Congwen's attitude toward love reflected theories of physiological desire which were prevalent during his time.\textsuperscript{61} This would account for the author's perception of love as a violent impulse, one which often brings tragedy or destruction. In \textit{Border Town} (Bian cheng, 1934), for instance, Cuicui's mother had a love affair with a soldier at Chadong and became pregnant as a result.\textsuperscript{62} Elopement was out of the question for this unfortunate couple, and after her lover died from illness, Cuicui's mother committed suicide. Cuicui was thus left an orphan at a young age.

Illicit love and the penalty for this love is the theme of "Qiaoxiu and Dongsheng" (Qiaoxiu he Dongsheng 1947),\textsuperscript{63} one story in a trilogy about sexual taboo, elopement and crime. The story's nativist framework is provided by the dramatization of the rural custom of enforced death by drowning. This theme runs parallel to that in "The

\textsuperscript{60} Shen, "Sansan," in \textit{Chinese Earth}: 81.


\textsuperscript{62} Anthologized in \textit{Shen Congwen xiaoshuoxuan} (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1982), 2: 207-293.

\textsuperscript{63} "Qiaoxiu and Dongsheng" is anthologized in \textit{Shen Congwen wenji}, 7: 363-81. This story is one of a trilogy featuring Qiaoxiu as heroine. The other two stories are "After Snow" (Xueqing, 1946) and "Truth is Stranger than Fiction" (Chuanqi buqi, 1947).

The male spoken subject is equivalent to the male viewer in semiotic theory.
Water Funeral," the earlier work of *xiangtu wenxue* by Jian Xian'ai. In contrast to Luomao who was sentenced to drown for theft in "The Water Funeral," Qiaoxiu's widowed mother in "Qiaoxiu and Dongsheng" broke the chastity taboo for widows and was consequently forced into the lake with a millstone around her neck. This story is clearly narrated by the male spoken subject who gazes rapaciously on the "fresh, lustrous young flesh" of this naked woman just prior to her being pushed into the deepest part of the lake. The impulsive, destructive effects of love also dominate the lives of the next generation, specifically Qiaoxiu, who elopes with a suona player from Zhongzhai. This young man is eventually killed after a raid on some opium dealers, and Qiaoxiu and her two children are left in a position echoing the earlier one of her mother. In sum, the central narrative details of this trilogy are the ongoing cycle of illicit love which is eventually frustrated, children born out of wedlock, despair and death.

To turn briefly to Shen Congwen's novels, *Border Town* marks the end of the author's eleven-year absence from his home and the beginning of a new phase in which he began to embrace a pessimistic view of his region. The nativism of this novel derives from its descriptions of nature and water, which are reminiscent of Lu Xun's descriptions of Jiangnan in "Village Opera"; the disempowered, rural characterization; the author's idealized conceptions of rural life; and the regional customs such as the dragon boat races in celebration of the poet Qu Yuan. In the first instance, there is a detailed, vivid picture of the Miao mountain village of Chadong-- the villages houses half built over the water, the river and the high mountains on either side, the peach blossoms and the colourful purple clothing hung out to dry. The characters in the novel-- the romanticized figure of the old ferryman who is Shen's peasant ideal of honesty and simplicity; his sexually maturing

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65 The destructive effects of passionate love is the central theme of Shen's trilogy of which "Qiaoxiu and Dongsheng" is but one part.
granddaughter, Cuicui; and the two Wang brothers (Nuosong and Tianbao) who are the image of Miao morality and self-sacrifice-- are also typical of \textit{xiangtu wenxue}. The little drama involving these actors is played out against the novel's romanticized, bucolic setting whose pristine state is suspended in time, little affected by the outside world. The novel also documents in nativist fashion the Miao idiom of courtship called "taking the horse track" (\textit{zou malu 走馬路}), in which love songs from twelve different categories are used to evoke or express love.66 Like the heroes of Shen's romances, Nuosong uses the "envy song" to court Cuicui at night from the top of a high cliff overlooking the ferry dock.

The theme of \textit{Border Town}, which is a variation on the author's recurring theme of love and Freudian sexual yearning, is closely linked with the author's psychology. There is not the same degree of wish fulfillment in \textit{Border Town} as there is in Shen's Miao romances; however, Shen Congwen's concern with the Confucian constraints governing sexual expression as well as his own fruitless search for a life beyond his grasp are impulses behind the narration of this novel. The events of \textit{Border Town} hinge on the circumvention of Cuicui and Nuosong's love and marriage because of a misunderstanding arising from the death of Nuosong's brother. Passions are unfulfilled, and the actors in the novel undergo unhappy or violent ends. Two years after the publication of \textit{Border Town}, Shen Congwen wrote that his intention in writing this novel was "not to guide the reader on an excursion into Taoyuan, but to borrow a few honest and simple folk from a small village in the You Shui basin seven hundred \textit{li} above Taoyuan. When these folk became involved in practical human affairs, each would have his or her share of sorrow and happiness and would give an appropriate explanation of 'love.'\" 

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From this statement it is clear that the author's intention is neither utopian nor is it to examine the many dimensions of Chu culture. Instead, Shen Congwen used the idyllic atmosphere of the remote mountain village as a stage, not just for the examination of love, but also for the working out of his own psychology. The pessimism colouring this novel and the loneliness and sadness of the tone of the story could be the subject of a statement Shen Congwen made about his other writing.

*Phoenix*, written one and one-half years prior to *Border Town*, is Shen Congwen's most nativist novel. This novel is set in Shen's native place of Fenghuang, or more specifically, Shen's roots in the Miao border west of Fenghuang, of which there is a panoramic description in the novel. In brief, it is a story about a city stranger who meets a country girl and dreams of dalliance and even of giving up his old life. The novel, or more precisely novella, is pervaded with Chu mysticism, which is expressed through *luguan* music and Miao discourse through song. This novel is C.T. Hsia's favorite: Hsia finds its pastoral vision and its "primacy of the mythical imagination" comparable to Yeats.

According to Hsia, both writers shared a creative concern which stressed the "virtues of an ordered existence in rhythmic keeping with nature and the gods." *Phoenix* is a regional

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67 Shen Congwen, "Congwen xiaoshuo xizuoxuan daixu," *Shen Congwen wenji*, 11: 45.

68 I am referring here to some contemporary writers, specifically Han Shaogong, who make use of use West Hunan as a site for their examinations into Chu culture.

69 In the "Author's Preface" to the English version of *Recollections of West Hunan*, Shen Congwen states:

Rereading these four collections of essays, what strikes me as strange is that although written at different times, with different backgrounds and feelings, they share one common characteristic. All are permeated with a local idyllic atmosphere tinged with loneliness and sadness, as if I grieved over many of the people and events I described. Perhaps this was due to some inherent weakness in my character since I came from an ancient race, or perhaps it was just my reaction after all the wounds life had inflicted on me. What I wrote or failed to write reflect [sic] the serious injuries I suffered both physically and mentally, which could not be remedied despite all my efforts (14).

I am unable to locate the original Chinese text for this quotation.

70 C. T. Hsia, *History of Modern Chinese Fiction* 190

71 Ibid.
apologia for regional images and legends like blood feuds and the gu poison cult. In sum, it is the expression of Shen Congwen's cultural nostalgia-- his yearning for an antidote to the twentieth century Chinese wasteland.

*Little Stockade* (Xiaozhai, 1937), written three years after *Phoenix*, reflects Shen Congwen's increasing pessimism about the future of his region. This is a dystopic novel which is a mirror image of his earlier pastoral fiction. The main actors in this work are a corrupt military detachment, a diseased prostitute, her madam and a young boy with dropsy, the last of whom is just learning as a customs official how to cheat on the local peasants. He represents the type of leeching opportunism filtering into West Hunan from the outside, more developed world. This is a nativist theme we have seen in many other examples of *xiangtu wenxue*.

Shen's second trip back to Hunan in 1937 resulted in two other long works: his non-fictional literary gazetteer *Xiangxi* (West Hunan, 1939) and the novel *Chang he* (Long River, 1934-42). The latter is both a pastoral comedy and Shen Congwen's requiem for his region and its old way of life. This novel depicts in more detail than his other works the forces of decay which Shen Congwen posited were undermining his region. Kinkley maintains that one source of this decay lay in the greater opportunities for gain which were created by parasitic armed forces and tax collectors. Shen Congwen, however, like other writers of *xiangtu wenxue*, put his region's disintegration down to the coming of commerce and prosperity, that is, to the "profit-only mentality which was vulgarizing people's outlook on life." In *Long River* there is a

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72 Kinkley 231.
73 Kinkley 231.
74 Kinkley 245, 246.
75 Ibid. 246.
76 Shen, "Chang he tiji," Preface to *Chang he* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1943): i.
criticism of the replacement of rural industry with city manufacture; machines are faulted
with being the instruments of "bureaucratic capitalism." The hostility to commerce in
this and other of Shen's works parallels the English attachment to country ways and
feelings and the idealization of the "natural" or "moral economy" which served as the
foundation for "pastoral happiness and virtue." The theme of moral decay and the
degeneracy brought to a previously undefiled rural region by the outside world is typical of
\textit{xiangtu wenxue} and makes the regional Shen Congwen comparable to Hwang Chun-ming.

In conclusion, what features of Shen Congwen's fiction make this writer a typical
\textit{xiangtu zuojia}? The main one, and one which is the trademark of most \textit{xiangtu wenxue}, is
the sentiment of nostalgia which inspired the author to begin creating sketches of his
childhood home. These short narratives, based on childhood recollections, relate the local
colour, plants, animals and simple rural activities of West Hunan and, in this respect, they
are reminiscent of many works of \textit{xiangtu wenxue}. Like Wang Luyan, Shen Congwen
wrote these early pieces of fiction while he was living in loneliness in the big city of
Beijing. In his later works, Shen Congwen was driven by this same sentiment of nostalgia
to write about other aspects of his region, specifically, its decay. These works are similar
to the fiction of Hwang Chun-ming: the regional disintegration described by these authors
is attributed to outside forces, especially commercialism and the profit motive which
disrupt the region's premordial, pristine existence. Once this change is in place, this
pristine state is irretrievable.

Other nativist aspects of Shen Congwen's works are the dramatic elements of his
fiction which form the framework for the non-nativist themes in his other works. Many of
these themes do not involve the countryside or tradition per se; instead, the countryside
serves as the backdrop for the author's philosophical speculations about love, sexuality,
God or religion. The only exception to this is "Guisheng" in which tradition is

\footnote{Kinkley 173.}
foregrounded and which has some elements in common with China's leftist writers of the 1930s.

As a regional writer, Shen's regional folkways dovetail with his nativism in his depiction of the exotic regional culture of Hunan. Shen renders this diffusely, allowing it to blend in and symbolize the vastness of China's hinterland. In this respect, Shen's nativism is universal, that is, it differs little from that of other parts of China or other Chinese geocultural areas. Shen's regionalism--his insight into the locale and the customs of a little-known region of rural China--point the way for a national revival, though this was not his primary preoccupation in writing about Hunan. Instead, as a writer of xiangtu wenxue, Shen Congwen wrote from nostalgia for his home and from his concern for the passing of its native traditions.

The Writers of the Northeast

In the 1930s, there was a group of writers writing in Japanese-dominated Manchuria (known as Dongbei or the Northeast) which was also the source for another type of regional xiangtu wenxue. These writers were known collectively as the Northeast Group of Writers (Dongbei zuojia qun 东北作家群), though many of them, such as Xiao Hong or Xiao Jun, were also better known as individuals. Besides writing about local colour and customs and peopling their stories with characters drawn from the Northeast, one or two of the writers in this group also actively wrote about Japanese aggression. Besides being a threat to regional security, the domination of the Northeast by the Japanese in the 1930s was the greatest threat to Chinese national unity. The writers of the Northeast responded to the aggression against their homeland with a strong sense of national consciousness and an awareness of the fragility of their region. Their works express the
co-mingling of regional and national interests which is typical of regional *xiangtu wenxue* under foreign domination.

The year 1928 is an important one for the history of the literature of China's Northeast. In December of that year, the Young Marshall Zhang Xueliang renounced his regional control of the Northeast, northern and southern China were reunited under Chiang Kai-shek and the capital was moved to Nanking. In that year, literature began to flourish in the Northeast, spurred on by literary trends both inside and outside of China. Between the year 1922 and 1928 works by Chinese writers such as Lu Xun, Guo Moruo, Bing Xin, Ye Shengtao and Yu Dafu were extensively introduced into the Northeast through the medium of the journal, the *Shengjing shibao* (盛京時報 Shengjing Times). By the end of the decade, leftist journals such as *Chuangzao yuekan* (創造月刊) which were carrying stories by Jiang Guangci and Ding Ling began to make an appearance in the region. Russian literature and Japanese proletarian literature (*pulo wenxue* 普羅文學) were also translated and reprinted and proved to be highly influential in Northeastern literary circles. There was even a call for proletarian literature which went up in 1929. All this activity was curtailed, however, when the Mukden Incident broke out in 1931, and the three provinces of the Northeast fell into Japanese hands. For the next fourteen years under Japanese domination the configuration of Northeastern literature was determined almost exclusively by the presence of Japan.

During the Japanese occupation, two types of literature were produced in the Northeast. The first was allied with the Japanese rulers and was referred to as Imperial Literature (*wangdao wenxue* 王道文學) or "Whitewash Literature" (*fenshi wenxue* 菩飾文學). As these terms imply, this literature reinforced Japanese interests and the...
attempts of the Japanese government to assimilate the region. The second was the nativist trend in which writers such as Liang Shanding, Yuan Xi, Wang Qiuying, and Dan Di were the first to raise the clarion call for resistance efforts against the Japanese. This second trend formally began in 1933 with the publication of Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun’s jointly-authored collection of stories and essays entitled *Trudging* (Ba she, 1933) and continued until the end of the war in 1945. These writers were influenced by the Chinese literature published earlier; they also exhibited similarities with the earlier Chinese *xiangtu wenxue*.

The development of this second trend of literature in the Northeast was augmented by underground political activity and journals established during this period. In 1932, for instance, the Manchurian Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party moved from Shenyang to Harbin, at which time it commenced anti-Japanese propaganda and organized the northern literary arts movement. In 1933, the supplement *Ye shao* commenced publication through the influence of Xiao Jun and became the primary medium of publication for writers like Xiao Hong. Xiao Hong published more works in this literary supplement than any other writer. These included her five works written under the penname of Qiao Yin which were later anthologized in *Trudging*. Besides Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun, many other dramatists, poets and essayists were also products of the literary arts world in Harbin at this time.

Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun's *Trudging* had the distinction of being the first collection of short stories and essays published during this period. Furthermore, this collection was

81 Ibid. 41.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 For example, the dramatist Sai Ke (Chen Ningqiu), the poet and essayist Shu Qin, and writers Luo Feng and Yang Shuo. (Ibid. 12.)
perhaps the most strongly-articulated protest against the Japanese domination of these writers' homeland. This work with its heavy nativist colouration was immediately proscribed by the Japanese, however, and the mantle of resistance subsequently fell to other writers such as Wang Qiuying and Liang Shanding. The latter, for instance, wrote about the struggles of the labouring class under the heavy boot of the Japanese and vowed to destroy the atmosphere of "whitewashing" that dominated literary circles.87

After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident erupted in July, 1937, the anti-Japanese stance of the writers of the Northeast, not to mention their goal of countering the pro-Japanese literature of the region, became even more pronounced. As a result, xiangtu wenxue became closely linked with resistance efforts. Liang Shanding, for instance, advocated that xiangtu wenxue realistically reflect the life of the peasants and the farming villages and concern itself with local customs in order to expose the realities of Japanese occupational rule.88 The Japanese, in the meantime, merely mocked xiangtu wenxue and, instead, trumpeted "colonial literature" (zhimindi wenxue殖民地文学 which they insisted was the only literature which could "strengthen the colony" (qianghua zhimindi强化殖民地).89 The fact that the Japanese wished to import their own national literature into Manchuria made the Northeastern writers aware that their literature could readily become a "sojourning" literature, such as the xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s. Lu Xun's statement about the "fleeting appearance of nostalgia," which he used with reference to the xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s could apply equally well to these Northeastern writers. Indeed, for these writers, the loss of their homeland was a daily experience which they agonized over

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86 Ibid. 42.
87 As quoted in Huang 41.
88 Liang Shanding, "Xiangtu wenxue yu 'Shanding hua,'" Mingming, 5, as quoted in Huang 42.
89 This sentiment is expressed in "Xiangtu yu wenxue," "Zai lun zhimindi wenxue" and other articles in Manzhou wenyi wenjian, as cited in Huang Wanhua, 42.
until some did, in fact, move away. At this time their nostalgia became intermingled with a very real anxiety for the fate of their region and for the Chinese people as a whole.

In sum, the genesis of literature in China's Northeast is closely linked with the anti-imperialist and humanist traditions of May Fourth. May Fourth was the real beginning of anti-imperialism in China, and in its confrontation with the Japanese Other, the xiangtu wenxue of the Northeast was a fleshing-out of May Fourth anti-imperialist themes. Culturally, its alignment with the labouring classes was also a legacy of May Fourth. This discussion will proceed with an examination of three writers who are representative of China's Northeastern xiangtu wenxue.

Xiao Jun

Xiao Jun, the author of the well-known, anti-Japanese novel Village in August (Bayue de xiangcun 八月的鄉村, 1935), is the most representative of the Northeastern writers who wrote on the theme of Japanese aggression. During the early 1930s, Xiao Jun was actively engaged in underground activity and revolutionary work as a guerrilla fighter. These experiences formed the basis for his novel which is structured around motifs of war, romance, class struggle, the revolutionary power of the peasants and anti-Japanese sentiment. It is clear from reading the works of this writer that the national struggle against Japan was inseparable from that which was being waged at home.

Xiao Jun's revolutionary activity began after 1937 with the eruption of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident and the outbreak of war. These events prompted Xiao Jun to leave the Northeast together with Xiao Hong and to travel to Wuhan, the site of the Chinese Writers' Anti-Aggression Association. From there, they went to Linfen, Shanxi, where Xiao Jun accepted a position as the cultural arts advisor at the People's Revolutionary
University. Shortly after accepting this post, Xiao Jun resigned in order to realize his long-held wish to participate in the anti-Japanese guerrilla movement at Wutai Mountain (Wutai Shan). This wish was never realized, however, because on the way to Wutai, Xiao Jun encountered Ding Ling. Ding Ling had by then already been involved in revolutionary activity for several years, and, as Xiao Jun was already well-known as the author of *Village in August*, he was persuaded by both Ding Ling and Mao Zedong to go to Yan'an, the base for the Chinese Communist Party. In Yenan, however, both Ding Ling and Xiao Jun soon became disillusioned with Mao and the Party's method of ideological reform which was carried out through a number of campaigns to "rectify (unorthodox) tendencies." Feeling betrayed, they joined a group of revolutionary writers who authored a number of critical essays condemning what they considered to be the distortion of Communist ideals in practice and the subordination of humanitarian values to short-term tactical goals. A second concern of these writers was the role of the writer in a Party-run society, a role which they felt must not consist of propagandist for the regime. Shortly thereafter in 1942, Mao Zedong's *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art* was published which set down the Party line on all forms of artistic and cultural expression. The fears of these writers were thus borne out with the publication of the *Talks*.

In the same year that the *Yan'an Talks* were published, the Chinese Communist Party launched its first Rectification Campaign (1942). This was the first of a series in which intellectuals were sent "down to the villages" (*xia xiang* 下鄉) to learn about rural life from the peasants. The next year in 1943, the movement reached out to the cadres, and Xiao Jun went down to the countryside voluntarily to live the life of a peasant. He returned to Yan'an in 1944 and requested to enter the Chinese Communist Party, though he later reconsidered his membership because of his dissatisfaction with the Party. Xiao Jun

returned to his home in the Northeast after Japan's defeat at the end of the war at which time the three provinces of the region were returned to Chinese rule.

Xiao Jun is most famous for his novel, *Village in August*, which he wrote under the penname of Tian Jun 天君. C.T. Hsia considers this novel a type of "proletarian and romantic-revolutionary" work of fiction, besides being the first novel to embody the theme of anti-Japanese resistance.92 *Village in August* is an episodic narrative about a roving band of guerrilla soldiers whose enemies are the Japanese, the Manchukuo puppet troops and the Guomindang. In the course of the novel, a pro-Japanese landlord is shot and his tenant farmers are recruited to their cause. The novel concludes with the band moving out to Dong'an for further training and supplies while a small detachment is left behind to care for the sick and wounded. At this point, the novel's romantic subplot involving the relationship between Captain Xiao Ming and Anna, a young Korean girl in the band, pointedly becomes a prop to emphasize the ideological orientation of the story. General Chen Zhu, commander of the band, orders Xiao Ming to stay behind at Dragon's Claw Hill while he takes Anna with him on the march to Dongan. The resulting conflict between the ideals of romantic love and revolutionary duty weigh most heavily on Xiao Ming whose origin is bourgeois. He grows increasingly dispirited over the deprivation of his personal happiness and ultimately loses the respect of his men who scorn and ridicule him.

In more ways than one, *Village in August* is a political novel: it vilifies the Guomindang for their part in the evils committed by the landlords; it also preaches class struggle and the proletarian revolution. As a novel about class struggle, and especially the episode in which the pro-Japanese landlord is executed, it foreshadows the Chinese proletarian novels about land reform of the decade of the 1940s. In sum, *Village in August* represents an important transition in the political development of Chinese xiangtu wenxue.

92 Hsia 273.
After writing a number of stories about the anti-Japanese struggle, Xiao Jun began writing descriptive narratives about daily life which are more nativist in tone than *Village in August*. His two collections of short stories, entitled *On the River* (江上, 1936) and *Sheep* (羊, 1935) and a second novel, *Third Generation* (三代, 1937), were all written while the author was living in Shanghai and are based on nostalgic reminiscences of life in his home region of the Northeast. These three works describe the sufferings endured by the people of the Northeast after the region was lost to the Japanese; they also embody themes of Northeastern village social life, such as the contradictions between the peasants and landlords. In brief, they are less propagandistic than *Village in August* and are more characteristic of the nativist sub-genre.

As in other works of *xiangtu wenxue*, the characters in these stories by Xiao Jun are typically from China's disempowered lower classes. These can be listed as the lowest-ranking among the enlisted army men, forestry wardens, dock workers, child labourers in coal smelters, people living in exile, dancing girls who moonlight as prostitutes, sailors and sheep thieves, all of whom are affected either by class oppression or the national disaster of the Mukden Incident. "Widower" (鳏夫, 1935), for instance, describes the lonely life of an honest but psychologically weak forestry warden and his exploitation at the hands of a landlord. This story is based on Xiao Jun's memories of mountain village life in his native village of Liaoxi, Liaoning Province, and echoes the theme of oppressive class relations found in *Village in August*. The other three stories in *On the River* are "Story of Horses" (马的故事, 1935), which narrates the life of a farming family at the time of the Mukden Incident; the title piece, "On the River" (江上, 1936), which describes the hardships of the life of a dockworker; and

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93 This is the first story in the collection *On the River* (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 1982): 1-75.

"Fellow Traveller" (Tongxingzhe 同行者, 1936),\textsuperscript{95} which comprises a fragment from the life of a wanderer. Unlike Village in August which is based on the author's indirect knowledge of the history of the Panshi guerrilla band, coupled with his personal experience of life in the army, the stories in the two collections are based on the author's life experience.\textsuperscript{96} These collections represent Xiao Jun's increasing artistry with respect to autobiographical material.

Xiao Jun's second novel, Third Generation, is also set in the author's native place-- a Liaoxi mountain village-- and is based on historical materials which the author garnered from his childhood memories.\textsuperscript{97} This novel is an account of the conflict between the peasants of Ling River and the landlords; in the end, the peasants defy landlord oppression by "going up the mountain to become bandits" (shang shan dang huzi 上山當鬍子). This theme is also present in Duanmu Hongliang's Korchin Plains (Ke'erqinqi caoyuan 科爾沁旗草原, 1939) and is symptomatic of the collapse of the Chinese social order which occurred with the downfall of the Qing empire and the beginning of the Republican period. During that period in Chinese history, many peasants became bandits or they took control of forest lands to wreak revenge on the landlords. There is little romance associated with the bandits in this novel; on the contrary, they suffer the same hardships as the peasants, though they also long to return to the farming life. In sum, Third Generation is the reflection of the social life of the period from the 1911 Revolution to the Changchun demonstration of 1915 against Yuan Shikai and the Twenty-One Demands; the novel could thus be classified as a kind of historic epic.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{95} "Story of Horses" is anthologized in On the River 76-94; "On the River" and "Fellow Traveller" are also anthologized in the same collection, pp 95-133 and 134-164, respectively.

\textsuperscript{96} Xing Fujun 57.

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid. 58.

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid. 59.
In conclusion, as a writer of regional *xiangtu wenxue*, Xiao Jun narrates the history and social life of his native home in the Northeast during the period of Japanese Occupation. The struggles against the Japanese which are depicted in his fiction mingle with the struggles of the peasants against the landlords and, in this respect, foreshadow the development of Chinese Communist *xiangtu wenxue* of the 1940s. The nativist elements in Xiao Jun's fiction derive from his nostalgic reminiscences of his homeland, his sympathetic portrayals of the life of the peasants and the life of the people of his region. Though Xiao Jun's works represent a transitional period to a more politicized *xiangtu wenxue*; nonetheless, his memories of his homeland upon which he based his works make him as much of a *xiangtu zuojia* as the other writers discussed so far.

**Duanmu Hongliang**

Duanmu Hongliang is another major writer of the Northeast Group of Writers. The regional nativism of this writer is evoked by his naturalistic descriptions, his accounts of the pain and oppression suffered by the peasants because of the Japanese occupation of their homeland, the legends and folklore of his region and the peasants' revolutionary potential. Like some of the works by Xiao Jun, the stories by Duanmu Hongliang which deal with the latter theme also anticipate the political works of the 1940s about class struggle and land reform. In brief, Duanmu Hongliang's regional images evoke the sociocultural matrix of Northeastern peasant life and the peasants' potential to change.

Duanmu Hongliang was born in 1912 in Changtu, Liaoning. He was a student in Tianjin during the May Fourth movement and read many translations of foreign works, including Lenin, and literary and political journals. This writer was attracted to the works of Balzac and Tolstoy and was also influenced by Lu Xun, Guo Moruo, Ye

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Shengtao and Mao Dun, especially Mao Dun's *Midnight*, from which he learned a range of stylistic techniques.\(^{100}\) When the Mukden Incident erupted, Duanmu Hongliang became involved in anti-Japanese activities and was subsequently expelled from school. He left Tianjin and in 1932 entered the History Department of Qinghua University where he continued his political activities. Duanmu Hongliang's best-known work, *Korchin Plains*, documents the change in a Northeastern farming village around the time of the Mukden Incident. This novel represents the accumulation of Duanmu Hongliang's revolutionary thought and experience which he brought to bear in his descriptions of peasant life and struggle.

*Korchin Plains* is set in the author's native home and is based on an incident in Duanmu Hongliang's father's family.\(^{101}\) According to historical documentation, refugees began flooding into the area of the Korchin Plains and opening up land at the beginning of the Qing period.\(^{102}\) Two hundred years prior to the time at which Duanmu Hongliang wrote this novel, a family by the name of Ding came to Guandong in the Northeast from Shandong. This family was the prototype for the big landlord family which eventually dominated the Northeastern region.\(^{103}\) Duanmu Hongliang's own family members were also pioneers in the area of Guandong, and in the author's great grandfather's time they were the biggest landlords in the area. At the time of Duanmu Hongliang's father, however, this family had already begun to decline.\(^{104}\) The Dings, on the other hand, established their economic power through pioneering land reclamation, exploitation and collusion with officials, but they eventually lost their power with the outbreak of the


\(^{101}\) Ibid. 103.

\(^{102}\) Xing Fujun 78.

\(^{103}\) Fu Hu 121.

\(^{104}\) Ibid.
Russo-Japanese war, the Mukden Incident and the expanding power of Japanese imperialist economics.\textsuperscript{105} Their decline is symptomatic, not just of the "degeneracy of the landlord class" as the Chinese critics put it, but also of the loss of the whole Northeastern region to the Japanese.\textsuperscript{106}

Besides the novel's historical theme of the Northeastern landlord class, \textit{Korchin Plains} is also an account of collusion, class conflict and exploitation. These are the subjects of a statement that Duanmu Hongliang made concerning his intention in writing \textit{Korchin Plains}: "I wished to expose how the great Northeastern landlords used commercial capital to buy up land, how they bullied the nomads and peasants and exploited the tenant farmers, and finally, how they made use of "feudal superstition" [quotes mine] to solidify their ruling authority, and all this through my description of the magnate Ding family of the Korchin tribe." 通过對科爾沁族的首戶丁家這個大財主的描寫, 推露東北的大地主怎樣利用商業資本收買地, 怎樣欺凌農牧民, 怎樣殘酷地剝削佃戶, 又是怎樣利用封建迷信去鞏固其統治權利, 用以說明東北大土地主的發家史以及他們對農牧民之間的尖銳的階級對立\textsuperscript{107} \textit{Korchin Plains} is thus a novel about China's domestic oppression, which is framed within the larger parameters of historical aggression and expanding imperialist economics. As a novel whose scope of subject matter is very broad, \textit{Korchin Plains} can be considered a type of modern epic reminiscent of \textit{Midnight}.

\textit{Korchin Plains} is peopled with figures driven by instinctive heroism, coarseness, ferocity, and a Cossackian wiliness and toughness. This portrait of a people and of a vigorous, primitive region set apart from the decadence of the coastal cities is reminiscent of Shen Congwen's fiction and his unshakable faith in the essential goodness of the region

\textsuperscript{105} The critic Xing Fujun, for instance, interprets the novel as an account of the "degeneracy of the feudal landlords." (Xing Fujun, "Shishi: Duanmu Hongliang wenxue qibu de xuanze," \textit{Wenxue pinglun}, 6 [1987]: 78.)

\textsuperscript{106} Wang Yao, \textit{Zhongguo xinwenxue shigao} (Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1982), 2: 475.

\textsuperscript{107} As quoted in Hu Wenbin 101-2.
and the people of West Hunan, a faith which was also nurtured by his memories of home. 108 The two protagonists of Korchin Plains, Ding Ning and his friend/foe Dashan, are both modelled on members of Duanmu Hongliang's maternal family and are heros of the oppressed, in the first instance, and of the tenant farmers, in the second. This type of heroism makes Korchin Plains reminiscent of the romantic-revolutionary fiction produced in the leftist decade of the 1930s. 109 The peasants in this work are coarse, tough, savage and primitive; their strength and energy originates from the earth. These characteristics inform Duanmu Hongliang's novels with a naturalistic imagery which endows his nativism with a romantic, Byronic and elemental quality unique in the fiction of the Northeast.

Besides Korchin Plains, Duanmu Hongliang was also the author of a number of short stories on a variety of themes. One recurring theme is the peasants' resistance against the Japanese which constitutes the storyline in "Torrential Muddy River" (Hunhe de jiliu 滬河的急流, 1936). 110 This story is about the peasants living in the region around Muddy River, Liaoning, who are ordered by the steward of the region to procure five hundred fox pelts in celebration of the wedding of the Imperial Concubine. The Concubine, who is a tribute from the Japanese, will enter the imperial bedchamber on the 1st of October, leaving the peasants only twenty-five days to deliver five hundred pelts in five colours to match the Manchukuo flag: red, yellow, white, black and purple. However, it is the wrong season for fox-hunting in White Deer Woods, and, unable to meet this quota, the peasants ultimately decide to stage an armed uprising against their oppressors. "Torrential Muddy River" concludes with Jinsheng, the lover of Shuiqinzi in the story, overcoming his initial


109 Ibid. 46.

110 Anthologized in Duanmu Hongliang xiaoshuoxuan (Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1982): 81-108.

hesitation and leaving for the front lines with the other peasants. This story embraces a high degree of artistry in its depiction of peasant life, material hardship and the peasants' developing consciousness of resistance.

"Why Doesn't Yeye Eat Gaoliang Gruel?" is another moving account of a peasant family living under the boot of Japanese oppression. In the narrative, it is the evening of the fifth anniversary of the Mukden Incident. Yeye and his family are visited by Ma Laoshi, an unemployed, poverty-stricken teacher who talks in a combination of classical allusions and quotations from the *Four Books*. Yeye is mourning the fifth anniversary of the death of his oldest son and, unable to eat his sorghum, watches in silence as Ma Laoshi greedily wolfs down a bowl of the shiny, lucent gruel. In the course of the conversation Ma Laoshi draws an analogy between the loss of their homeland and the defeat of the Kingdom of Zhou by King Wu. This well-known allusion, which confers considerable erudition on this simple story, stems from the example of the two sage-kings, Boyi and Shuqi, who regarded this defeat as one tyranny being replaced by another and vowed never again to eat millet from the Kingdom of Zhou. Ma Laoshi concludes his monologue by proclaiming that as they had also lost their land, they, too, should abstain from eating Zhou millet, or, in this case, sorghum gruel. In the meantime, Yeye watches in ironic silence as the famished Ma Laoshi wolfs down two more bowls, and he then inquires what happened to Boyi and Shuqi. "After that... um, they starved to death...." came Ma Laoshi's reply. Ma then added by way of explanation that even if they had wanted to eat Zhou millet, there was none to be had. "Why doesn't Granddad Eat Sorghum Gruel" concludes in pathos with the outraged Ma Laoshi intoning these lines like a refrain: "All of them,

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113 Duanmu Hongliang 247.
starved to death. There was nothing for them to eat, even if they'd wanted to, nothing, even if they'd wanted to."

"Red Night" (Hongye 1943) is the final story of Duanmu Hongliang's selected for discussion. The nativism of this piece lies in its narration of a local legend about a place called Kunlun Grotto and the annual shaman's dance performed by the local people to invoke the transcendent power of the spirits. The story begins with the narration of the legend of Stone Man by the mother of Caogu. In the legend, the old man in the local hamlet promised the hand of his daughter to any man who entered the grotto and came back out the other end. Many young men died in the grotto until one, more handsome than the others, made it through by using his own blood as fuel for his torch. By the time he exited from the grotto, his blood was all gone and the young man turned to stone. The young woman in the legend happily marries the Stone Man and, embracing him, also turns to stone. This legend comes to life in Caogu's mind, and when she joins the dance she imagines her older sister is dancing with the Stone Man. She only comes to her senses when the dance is stopped by the shaman who accuses two young people of sinning. Normally, love between boys and girls is something to boast about; however, on this night, Caogu's older sister and Precious Dragon had defiled the religious rites and angered the spirits. The subtext of "Red Night" is sexual awakening, love and fertility-- motifs which are evoked against the backdrop of local legends and stories, local color and natural beauty. "Red Night" is a haunting tale of lyricism and a unique combination of nativist elements.

In sum, Duanmu Hongliang's regional writing is about the peasants of the Northeast, their potential to create change in their lives, their pain under Japanese oppression and the legends and myths of the Northeastern region. His writing is highly lyrical and engaging.

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114 Ibid. 251.

115 Anthologized in Duanmu Hongliang xiaoshuoxuan: 254-271.
and his nativism is the most primitive and earthy of all the writers in the Northeast Group of Writers.

Xiao Hong

Xiao Hong is the most well-known and, in my view, most interesting, of China's Northeastern writers. She began writing at the age of twenty-one and wrote for a period of ten years prior to her premature, tragic and lonely death in Hong Kong at the age of thirty-one. Xiao Hong's childhood overlapped with the chaos and imperialist aggression of China's Republican period, and she was brought into direct contact with many of the revolutionary aspects of this period. However, her works are not overly concerned with this; instead, they focus on the domestic and private sphere of life and her family compound. The narration of the regional images of her work--the way of life, the customs, beliefs and practices of Hulan--is based on her memories of her birthplace in Hulan county. This writer also brings a special perspective as a woman to her narration, which makes her works different from Xiao Jun's and very different again from Shen Congwen's. Besides being famous for her evocative style and her recreations of peasant life in Northeastern China, Xiao Hong is also well-known for her feminist thought.

In the private sphere of her life, much of Xiao Hong's life was spent grappling with feelings of lovelessness, unhappiness and oppression experienced both in childhood and later in her adult life in two abusive relationships, first with Xiao Jun, then with Duanmu Hongliang. Xiao Hong recounted that she spent her life in "perpetual longing and pursuit to find ... warmth and love," seeking that which others took for granted but which seemed to be forever denied her. Her adult life brought her extreme poverty, an unwanted child, addiction to opium and an attempted suicide until her life was brought to a premature

end by the illness which had always haunted her. Notwithstanding these misfortunes, Xiao Hong produced a large and brilliant fictional corpus.

Xiao Hong was born into a landlord family near Harbin in Heilongjiang province. This was headed by a tyrannical father and a mother of "mean words and nasty looks"\textsuperscript{117} who passed away when Xiao Hong was nine. The central figure in Xiao Hong's youth was her grandfather from whom she derived a certain amount of love and affection. Xiao Hong credits her grandfather with nurturing in her the "strong sense of humanity and love for nature and beauty"\textsuperscript{118} which figure in her work. Xiao Hong had this to say about her grandfather: "I learned from my grandfather that besides coldness and hatred, life also includes warmth and love. And so, for me there is a perpetual longing and pursuit to find this warmth and love."\textsuperscript{119} Xiao Hong's novel, Tales of Hulan River (Hulan he zhuan 呼兰河传 1942), which is widely believed to be autobiographical,\textsuperscript{120} and in which the grandfather also figures, exemplifies this search. The element of nostalgia in Tales of Hulan River and in Market Street (Shangshi jie 商市街, 1936), which is the record of her life together with Xiao Jun, makes these works among the most nativist of Xiao Hong's fictional output.

Xiao Hong left Hulan in 1927 to attend a middle school in Harbin where she encountered the new thought then sweeping across China. She soon threw herself into anti-Japanese activities. After graduating from middle school in 1930, Xiao Hong faced the prospect of an arranged marriage by her parents, and she subsequently fled back to

\textsuperscript{117} Xiao Hong, Tales of Hulan River: 87, as quoted in Goldblatt 17.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid. 21.

\textsuperscript{119} Xiao Hong, "Yongjiu de chongjing he zhuiqiu" 74, as quoted in Goldblatt 21.

\textsuperscript{120} In my examination of Xiao Hong's works I intend to avoid ascribing a large degree of autobiographical meaning to this writer's works. This is based, in part, on my feeling that it is more interesting to examine her work from other angles and, in part, on the desire to avoid the autobiographical "phallacy," whereby male critics hold that women's writing is somehow closer to their experience than man's, and that the female text is the author or an extension of her unconscious. (Toril Moi 61.)
Harbin. There, alienated from family and friends, and beset by material and emotional problems, she sequestered herself in poverty and debt in Harbin's Dongxingshun Hotel-- a run-down rooming-house "peopled by vagabonds and prostitutes." It was shortly after this in 1932 that Xiao Hong first met Xiao Jun whom she recognized as the short story writer, San Lang 三郎. Her relationship with Xiao Jun and their subsequent residence together, first in a tiny hotel room in Harbin then in No. 25 Shangshi Jie (Market St.), coincided with the beginning of her writing career. Xiao Hong's first short story, "The Death of Wang Asao" (Wang Asao de si 王阿嫂的死, 1933),121 which is an account of landlord oppression held indirectly responsible for the death of a peasant woman, was written at this time. This, the four other stories published under the penname Qiao Yin and the six stories by San Lang which were all anthologized in Trudging were immediately proscribed by the Japanese. The couple's subsequent fear of arrest by the Japanese authorities prompted them to flee to Tsingdao in May, 1934, and later that year, to Shanghai. Xiao Hong vowed in Market Street that she would never return to the Northeast as long as Manchukuo existed.122 In Tsingdao, Xiao Hong wrote her first, and to some critics finest, novel, Field of Life and Death (Shengsichang 生死場, 1935). This was published in 1935 with the assistance of Lu Xun and with a preface by him and a postface by Hu Feng.

In examining Xiao Hong's works, I find it appropriate to apply the founding assumption underlying much feminist theory and practice, that is, "the personal is political." In brief, the "personal" encompasses the innate and socially acquired nature of the individual and the individual's experiences in the world, and these, in turn, reproduce dominant assumptions about subjectivity, such as gender difference and language, which

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122 "As long as there was a "Manchukuo," we would never again set foot on this soil." Xiao Hong, Market Street: A Chinese Woman in Harbin, Tr. Howard Goldblatt (Seattle and Washington: University of Washington Press, 1986): 130.
have political implications.\textsuperscript{123} This assumption is based on the concept of the social construct of femininity, rather than on a notion of biological femaleness, and on language as a site of political struggle.\textsuperscript{124} The subjectivity and the woman's voice in Xiao Hong's fiction recreate the dynamics of patriarchal power which govern relations and which inscribe gender difference into her female characters. The reproduction of Chinese cultural institutions in Xiao Hong's fiction is particularly relevant in this discussion about nativism and is directly linked in her fiction with her characters' gendered difference and social oppression. The narration of issues of gender and of the "negative" aspects of dominant patriarchal power in Xiao Hong's fiction is the source for Howard Goldblatt reference to her works, particularly \textit{Market Street}, as "feminist" and "anti-male."\textsuperscript{125}

Xiao Hong's feminist perspective is apparent in the construction of her female characters in, for instance, \textit{Field of Life and Death}. This novel is about peasant life, in particular, the lives of three peasant families, in a Manchurian village in the period preceding and just after the Mukden Incident of 1931. The novel unfolds with the hardships of the peasants, who are depicted as ignorant and conservative, and with the deepening encirclement of the Japanese occupation. Even without the Japanese, life has always been a bitter struggle, and, what with nature's mercilessness and the rapacious landlords who are demanding higher land taxes, the present time seems worse than usual. The omniscient narrator guides the reader through the vagaries of peasant existence: illicit sex and pregnancy, the agonies of childbirth, an aborted rebellion against rising taxes, madness and suicide, poverty and epidemic disease. The cyclical, non-developmental aspects of peasant existence are explained by way of the story's Buddhist subtext, that is, in terms of the endless round of "birth, old age, sickness and death" and the Buddhist


\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{125} Goldblatt, Introduction, \textit{Market Street}: x., xvi.
notion of the "sea of endless suffering." In the story, humans are little better than "mosquitoes"; they, together with their beasts, "busied themselves at living and at dying."\textsuperscript{126}

The diurnal life of the peasants provides the framework for the experiences of the women in the novel. As mentioned above, the narration of their pain and suffering stems from the realistic appraisal of women's sexual difference, patriarchal power and China's oppressive cultural institutions. The peasant women in this novel belong to the category of the marginalized subject which is the characterization typical of Chinese \textit{xiangtu wenxue}. In the case of \textit{Field of Life and Death}, the relationship of these women vis-a-vis the Japanese domination of the Northeast and vis-a-vis patriarchal power makes them doubly "colonized."

Mother Wang (Wang Po) is the village midwife and the dominant female character in \textit{Field of Life and Death}. She was originally married to an abusive man in the story and had lost a child through an accident. She then married and lived with Zhao San, a bigoted and impulsive peasant who comes to an awareness of his Chinese national identity in the wake of a personal history of setbacks. During the course of the story, Mother Wang discovers that her son has become a "red beard" (communist guerrilla), and when he is executed she loses her mental balance and attempts suicide notwithstanding her previous strength of character. Ultimately, her daughter also becomes a "red beard" to avenge her brother's death, and with this event, Mother Wang begins to develop a heightened political consciousness.

Yueying and Golden Bough (Jinzhi) are two women characters in the novel who suffer directly from their gendered difference. Yueying is the village beauty who dies an agonizing death amidst her own excrement, neglected and abused by her husband. The latter declares that having a wife like Yueying is like "being married to one of my own

ancestors and having to make offerings to her!"127 He argues that since Yueying is going to die, she does not need a comforter and props her up with bricks. Yueying complains sadly: "That heartless animal dreams of ways to torture me,"128 and three days later she is dead.

The life and fate of Golden Bough, on the other hand, reflect the author's in some respects. Golden Bough is seduced and made pregnant by a village youth, Chengye, in the story. After a shotgun marriage, she is subsequently overworked by her husband. Faced with increasing indebtedness, Chengye takes out his mounting frustration on their little daughter, Xiao Jinzhi (Little Golden Bough), and one day dashes her against the wall. He screams: "You bad investment. I'll sell you to pay off our debts." The narrative then adds sadly, "So ended a tiny life."129 Near the end of the tale, Golden Bough becomes a widow, and she makes her way to the city of Harbin. There, however, she is raped, and soon after she returns to the village. Golden Bough declares, "I used to hate only men; now I hate the Japanese instead"; and "Do I hate the Chinese as well? Then there is nothing else for me to hate."130

When Golden Bough makes this statement she is a mouthpiece for the author; however, there are clearly other implications for the progression of the narrative in these words. Up to this point, the themes of the novel have been nativist and feminist; at this point, however, the feminist interests collide with those of nationalism and, as can be expected, the balance of the novel-- the latter third-- gives way to the theme of Japanese aggression. In short, the "privileging of the nation," which is the common feature of so much of modern Chinese fiction, dominates the rest of the text. One day, so the narrative

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127 Ibid. 39.
128 Ibid. 40.
129 Ibid. 65.
130 Ibid. 100.
goes, the Japanese flag is planted in the village. Manchukuo is established, and the village women are raped by the incoming Japanese soldiers. Mother Wang is chosen as the character in the text to describe the violation of the Japanese troops: "The Japs in the village are getting worse and worse. They're slitting open the bellies of pregnant women to counteract the Red Gun Society (one of the volunteer armies). The live fetuses slide right out of the bellies." 131 The peasants explode in anger and, one by one, including Zhao San, become progressively involved in anti-Japanese activity. Generally speaking, the anti-Japanese content of the novel constitutes but a minor theme; nonetheless, Field of Life and Death has been lauded by Chinese critics as an "account of the initial stages of awareness and resistance of the peasants." 132 The author herself is also acclaimed by these critics as an anti-Japanese writer. While the Chinese critics prefer to rank Field of Life and Death alongside anti-Japanese works in the Chinese arsenal of anti-Japanese fiction, I myself prefer to read the novel primarily as a piece of nativist and feminist fiction.

In his preface to Field of Life and Death, Lu Xun comments that the novel is "a sketch, a narrative and a description of scenery." 133 Indeed, Xiao Hong has created scroll after scroll of imagistic, rural landscape in traditionally nativist style. Xiao Hong's recreation of her native place, which also extends to the desolate, backward, poor and dirty Harbin of the 1930s, was coloured by her flight from her fallen homeland. After Xiao Hong left the Northeast, she found her voice as a sojourner. Ultimately, her nostalgia as a refugee gave her work the characteristic stamp of xiangtu wenxue.

Xiao Hong's life in Shanghai was characterized by her deepening friendship with Lu Xun whom she came to regard as a personal mentor, her deteriorating relationship with

131 Ibid. 100.
132 Wang Yao, Zhongguo xin wenxue shikao (Shanghai, 1953), 1: 253, as quoted in Goldblatt, Hsiao Hong: 45.
133 Lu Xun, Xuyan (Preface), Shengsi chang. (Shanghai: Nuli she, 1938), 1.
Xiao Jun and her continued writing and publishing. *Market Street*, written in Shanghai, was completed in May of 1935 and published a year later, a mere eight months after *The Field of Life and Death*. This work is a chronological account of the last year and a half of Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun's life together in Harbin from the summer of 1932 until May 1934 prior to their flight to Tsingdao. This is primarily a work about urban life in the Northeast, specifically, the life of poverty-stricken urban intellectuals in the 1930s at the outset of Japanese rule. As such, it parallels other works of nativism about urban intellectuals.\(^{134}\) This piece of semi-autobiographical fiction depicts the I-narrator's many lonely hours of solitude and isolation, her writing, and her oppression and battering at the hands of Langhua, the figure based on Xiao Jun in the work. The latter two themes are the reason for Howard Goldblatt's evaluation of the work as "anti-male."\(^{135}\) In my opinion, however, Xiao Hong's representation of the gender issues in this work is based on her personal, real-life experience and not on a tendency toward misandry. More than any other of her works, *Market Street* exemplifies the critical adage that "the personal is political."

Xiao Hong was the author of a number of other, very moving accounts of women's experiences such as "Hands" (Shou 手掌, 1936) and "On the Oxcart" (Niucheshang 牛車上, 1936), the former of which is acclaimed by some critics as her best work.\(^{136}\) These stories feature female peasant characterization and various aspects of women's suffering; they are also characterized by a shift away from the anti-Japanese theme and toward the

\(^{134}\) For example, the late 1970s works by the Taiwanese writer, Chen Yingzhen (Huishengdun dalou: yun 霄, 1977), discussed in a later chapter.

\(^{135}\) Ibid. xvi.

\(^{136}\) These two stories are both anthologized in Xiao Hong, *Xiao Hong xuanji*, Zhongguo xiandai wenxuan congshu (Hong Kong: Xiang kang wenxue yanjiushe, 1980): 86-103, 104-115, respectively.

inclusion of a greater degree of Chinese nativist thematics. In short, these are also the features of Xiao Hong's great long narrative, *Tales of Hulan River*.

With the Marco Polo Incident and the outbreak of war Xiao Hong and Xiao Jun traveled to Wuhan, then to Linfen, Shanxi, where Xiao Hong broke off her common-law relationship with Xiao Jun. She subsequently returned to Wuhan via Xi'an. In Wuhan, Xiao Hong had formed a new relationship with Duanmu Hongliang which proved to be as equally destructive to her well-being as her previous relationship with Xiao Jun. During the period from 1936 to 1939 Xiao Hong lived in Chongqing, and there she wrote the bulk of her first draft of *Tales of Hulan River*. With the bombardment of Chungqing beginning in 1939, Xiao Hong left for Hong Kong. Prior to her lonely death in Hong Kong in 1942, she completed *Tales of Hulan River* and wrote her second and last novel.\(^{137}\)

Mao Dun remarks in his 1946 preface to *Tales of Hulan River* that the work is "a narrative poem, a colourful genre painting, a haunting song."\(^{138}\) Howard Goldblatt also refers to *Tales of Hulan River* as Xiao Hong's "most representative work" and "her most personal and artistic creation."\(^{139}\) Less a novel than a series of highly evocative sketches, *Tales of Hulan River* stands in strong contrast to the wartime propaganda which was at that time promoted as art in China.

As an exemplary work of nativism, *Tales of Hulan River* is characterized by its element of nostalgia which informs the description of the author's native place in Hulan, its customs, its peasant population and their mentality. *Tales of Hulan River* details the lives of this population—Widow Wang who is a seller of bean sprouts, the workers in the beancurd shop and the paper mill, the vender of rice pudding, the noodle makers, beggars, dyers, sorceresses, and carters, etc, as well as all the "inconsequential and common

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\(^{137}\) This is *Ma BoLe* (Ma BoLe [name], 1940).


\(^{139}\) Goldblatt, Introduction *The Field of Life and Death*: xxv.
realities"\textsuperscript{140} of daily life in Hulan. Life passes according to the Buddhist dictum of birth, old age, sickness and death and the simple philosophy of the Hulan natives. If someone asks a person of Hulan what he or she lives for, the answer is: "A person lives to eat food and wear clothes." \textsuperscript{141} If they are asked about death, they reply: "When a person dies that's the end of it." \textsuperscript{142} The concept of fate is often an intrinsic part of peasant philosophy, and in \textit{Tales of Hulan River} this philosophy colours the narrative with irony.

A second nativist feature of \textit{Tales of Hulan River} is its documentation of the dialect and customs of the Northeastern region. Two examples of the former are the expression "fire clouds" (\textit{huoshao yun} 火燒雲) for sunset and the slang phrase "hairy one" (\textit{maozi ren} 毛子人), the local reference to Caucasian foreigner. Both of these add to the strong local flavour of this work. The various customs and festivals detailed in \textit{Tales of Hulan River} include the dance of the sorceress for the treatment of illness, the Festival of the Hungry Ghosts during which the inhabitants of the town release lanterns on Hulan River and the outdoor opera performance which is staged to give thanks to the gods after a bountiful harvest. The narration of these customs provides a venue for the work's feminist discourse which, like that in \textit{Field of Life and Death}, focuses on women's oppression. For example, during the outdoor performance, marriages are often arranged by families who attend this performance. The narrator comments caustically on the fate of women who are the victims of these arranged marriages, and a little further on, the narrator also comments on the double standards involved in wife-beating:

\begin{quote}
The young women, bewildered, cannot understand why they must suffer such a fate, and so tragedy is often the result; some jump down wells, others hang themselves.
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{141} Xiao Hong, \textit{Hulan he zhuan} (Hong Kong: Xinyi chubanshe, 1958): 26.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
... [W]hy is it that no words of praise for the courage of these women who jump down wells are included in the memorial arches for a chaste woman? That is because they have all been intentionally omitted by the compilers of such memorials, nearly all of whom are men, each with a wife at home. They are afraid that if they write such things, then one day when they beat their own wife, she too may jump down a well; if she did she would leave behind a brood of children, and what would these men do then? So with unanimity they avoid writing such things, and concern themselves only with "the refined, the cultured, and the filial."

During the festival at the Temple of the Immortal Matron the narrative's feminist discourse is broadened to include an attack on sexual inequality and the socialization of men and women as this is mirrored in the female and male idols in the temple. However, the most scathing attack on the oppression of women appears in the the fifth chapter which chronicles the Chinese custom of the purchase of young girl children as child-brides. In this case, the vulnerability and powerlessness of a young child-bride leads to her beating, torture and death. She is subjected to the dance of the sorceress, tortured three times by immersion in boiling water and finally dies, killed off for no better reason than that she "didn't look or act much like a child-bride." The real reason for her death, however, is her sexual difference which allowed for her victimization at the hands of the Chinese patriarchal family system.

*Tales of Hulan River* was criticized by Maoist critics in China for its lack of a revolutionary ideology. These critics maintain that the novel represents a step backward in its depiction of the Communist revolutionary "struggle." As a consequence, both *Tales of Hulan River* and *Market Street* were neglected by a generation of Chinese critics. In my opinion, however, the lack of conformity to the Maoist line in *Tales of Hulan River* has

143 Xiao Hong, *Tales of Hulan River* 57-58.
144 Ibid. 132.
145 Quoted in Goldblatt, *Xiao Hong* 106.
allowed for the work's high degree of realism, especially where its depiction of China's peasant is concerned. The work portrays the peasants as cruel, ignorant, abused and abusive, stubborn, conservative and cowardly. Mao Dun notes that *Tales of Hulan River* is full of "poor creatures" who choose to be "slaves to tradition." The section dealing with the dangerous mudhole which annually claims the lives of animals and children but which never becomes the object of organized effort exemplifies the peasants' adherence to tradition and, according to Mao Dun's interpretation, can be read as an indictment of rural China. At the same time, this passage also symbolizes the cyclical non-development of Chinese peasant existence which remains the fate of the Chinese peasant even today. Mao Dun found the author's empathetic attitude toward the peasants perplexing; nonetheless, Xiao Hong's attitude signifies that she refused to put politics before art and allowed her natural sympathies to override revolutionary concerns. The latter she left for her more radical counterparts to explore.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, there are many writers of different regions of China who can be considered to be authors of regional nativism. However, I have selected only a few representative authors of this type of *xiangtu wenxue* because I assume that the regional implications of their art are shared by other writers in various regions of China. These shared features confer a strong degree of universalism onto this type of fiction which, in brief, makes regional *xiangtu wenxue* a type of national literature.

The works of the four writers discussed in this chapter are all centred on the author's native home. Some of these writers began writing in their native homes or provinces until circumstances forced them to leave. At this time, they travelled to China's large urban

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centres where they continued to write about their homes, guided by sentiments of nostalgia. This is the narrative configuration of all the different types of *xiangtu wenxue* discussed in this dissertation so far. To briefly summarize, some writers were compelled to leave their homes for financial reasons; others, such as Shen Congwen left for professional reasons. Others still, such as the writers of the Northeast, left because their homeland was invaded by the Japanese. Nonetheless, they were all prompted by obsessive sentiments of nostalgia to write about what they had left behind: peasants, carters, boatmen and women, in other words, all the various types of marginalized or "colonized" subjects which constitute the population of their home regions and of all of China.

Stylistically, the various types of regional *xiangtu wenxue* are quite different. Shen Congwen, for instance, is the author of a field and garden type of idyllic prose which is very different from Xiao Jun and Duanmu Hongliang's political novels and the latter's naturalism. Shen's subject matter, which ranges from his heroic romances about the Miao tribespeople to the boatmen and prostitutes of the Yuan River is also very different from the novels about the homeland by Xiao Jun and Duanmu Hongliang which combine anti-Japanese resistance with anger at the abuses of the landlord class. The works of all these male writers are very different again from the feminist thought and configuration of Xiao Hong whose works are filled with the images of the pain of down-trodden women and women suffering abuse at the hands of their spouses or the Chinese patriarchal family. In sum, these writers wrote about the same social class in China; however, their perspective and political or personal philosophy made their works quite different from each other and ultimately created a varied and interesting tapestry of China's regional life.

Finally, all these writers discuss issues in their works which have implications for modernity. The issue of sectionalism in Shen Congwen's works, the issues of imperialism and national liberation in the works of Xiao Jun and Duanmu Hongliang and the issues of
women's liberation in Xiao Hong's works are all "modern" issues. These are issues which came to the forefront during May Fourth and remain in various forms in present-day China. Unless they are resolved they will continue to define modern Chinese literature.
Chapter Four

China's Post-Yan'an Xiangtu Wenxue

They say some worker or other came here this evening from the district to drive us all into the collective farm. This is the end of our kind of life. You work and save till your hands are all corns and there's a hump on your back, and now they want you to throw all your possessions into the common pot—cattle, grain, poultry, even your house, I suppose? Looks as if it's a case of give your wife to the other man, and find yourself a whore....

--Mikhail Sholokov, Virgin Soil Upturned

In the decades of the 1940s and 1950s, two schools of fiction appeared in China whose classification as xiangtu wenxue is also based on regional considerations. The first is the Shanyaodan School (Shanyaodan pai 山藥蔓延派) associated with the Shanxi-Shaanxi liberated area and, the second, the Hehuadian School (Hehuadian pai 荷花淀派) associated with Henan. The writers in these schools share the same concern with the national struggle against Japan as the Northeastern Group of Writers; however, any resemblance which they bear to other forms of xiangtu wenxue, aside from the peasant characterization and the rural motif universally present in the xiangtu wenxue sub-genre, ends here. On the contrary, the fiction of the Shanyaodan and Hehuadian Schools is unique.

The fiction of the Shanyaodan and Hehuadian schools, especially the first, is predominately governed by socialist themes, and this is due to the development of this literature under Communist rule in the Chinese liberated areas. In 1942, Chinese literature became the exclusive domain of the Chinese Communist Party with the publication of Mao Zedong's Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art. The Talks compelled writers to "transform and remould their thoughts and feelings" in order to comply with the various formal and topical strictures outlined by Mao. As a result, much of the fiction which
emerged in the period since the *Yan'an Talks*, including the two schools discussed in this chapter, can be characterized as "literature of workers, peasants and soldiers" (*gongnongbing wenyi* 兵工文艺),\(^1\) a genre which dominated the Chinese literary world during the first two decades of Communist rule. Mao's theoretical foundation governing Chinese literature and art is summed up in the formula: "The unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of artistic form."\(^2\) In short, this formula spawned a generation of proletarian literature which praised the revolution and the Party and imputed a "revolutionary consciousness" to the peasant. At the same time, the Shanyaodan writers who in theory subscribed to this formula also found subtle ways to express their understanding and visions of Chinese peasant life which dissented from Mao's. One concern of this chapter is to show how this dissent took place.

As a type of socialist realism, much of the *xiangtu wenxue* of the 1940s and 1950s comprises a mirror of the Chinese Communist Party version of the major national events which took place during these decades. This was a period of socialist construction which began in the early 1930s with the establishment of mutual aid cooperatives,\(^3\) which was followed in 1942 by the movement for the transformation into agricultural cooperatives. These movements ultimately led to the land reform of the late 1940s and early 1950s and the establishment of people's communes beginning in 1958. The socialist construction of this period took place exclusively in the village which is also the fictional setting for the stories under discussion. The Chinese Communists initially turned to the rural countryside as the site for their political base after their defeat in the early 1930s in the urban centre of

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1. This is the type of "mass" literature promoted by Mao Zedong in his *Ya'nan Talks* which aimed at the education of the workers, peasants, soldiers and revolutionary cadres who comprised the audiences in the base areas.


3. These were a new method of village administration.
Shanghai. However, they had begun to view the rural areas as the site for the forces of revolutionary transformation as early as 1927. At that time, Mao Zedong envisioned a revolutionary potential existing in the Chinese peasantry which he theorized could be used to achieve the aims of the Party. On the basis of this theory, Mao set up peasant "soviets" in which he used latent class hatreds to carry out the first stages of land reform. Chinese history since that time comprises the various stages in the socialist transformation of the Chinese countryside, much of which was erroneous, egregious and highly destructive to human life. The works of the Shanyaodan school reflect the village as the locus of the early stages of revolutionary transformation and the peasants' resistance to this trend prior to its ultimate discontinuation. In sum, the village, the countryside and the peasant in these schools of fiction perform a very different ideological function than these elements in other works of xiangtu wenxue. This will become clear in the following discussion.

The Shanyaodan School and Zhao Shuli

The Shanyaodan School is associated with the northern provinces of Shanxi and Shaanxi and the new farming villages of the newly liberated areas. Its founder, Zhao Shuli, exercised extensive artistic influence over a group of nine writers including Ma Feng (1922- ) and Xi Rong (1922- ). Together, they became known as the Shanyaodan School.

The writers of the Shanyaodan School share a unique stylistic feature, and this is the inclusion in their fiction of elements from traditional Chinese folk literature. During the Yan'an period, the literary and arts circles in the base areas experienced an upsurge of interest in Chinese folk arts and popular literary forms such as storytelling and folk drama.

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This interest was engendered by Mao's promotion of national forms (\textit{minzu xingshi} 民族形式), which ultimately affected all areas of the Chinese arts in the liberated areas. The socialist realism of the Shanyaodan fiction was also affected.

The primary types of national forms which the Shanyaodan writers were influenced by were the storytelling (\textit{jianghua} 讲话) and "listen and record" (\textit{ting ji} 聆记) forms from China's oral tradition. As a youngster, Zhao Shuli grew up with the \textit{shuochang} 说唱 mode of storytelling which was popular in his native village. After he became involved in revolutionary activities, Zhao became adept at musical and artistic folk forms which he incorporated into the rhymed drama he wrote prior to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.\textsuperscript{5} Zhao also wrote a number of clapper arts (\textit{kuiban} 快板), and after 1949 he participated in folk literary activities in Beijing, such as editing the journal \textit{Shuoshuo changchang} 说说唱唱.\textsuperscript{6}

Zhao's influences from folk literature can be seen, for example, in his short story "Blacky Gets Married" (\textit{Xiao Er Hei jiehun, 小二黒结婚} 1943)\textsuperscript{7} and its examination of the question of free love. Two other short stories, "Record" (\textit{Deng ji, 登记} 1950) and "Shi Bulan Drives a Cart" (\textit{Shi Bulan gan che, 石不烂赶车} 1959), which are written in the "commentary" (\textit{ping shu} 評書) and \textit{shuochang wenxue} 说唱文學 styles, respectively, are also examples of this influence.\textsuperscript{8} The traditional technique of making everything clear at the very outset of the story, accompanied by the phrase "Let's start from the beginning and follow it from there" (\textit{Cong tou shuoqi, jieshangqu shuo}, 從頭說起,接上去說) is the trademark of Zhao Shuli's novel about collectivization, \textit{Three Mile Village} (\textit{Sanliwan, 三里湾}).


\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{7} Anthologized in \textit{Zhao Shuli wenji} (Beijing: Gongwen chubanshe, 1980), 1: 1-16.

\textsuperscript{8} "Record" is anthologized in \textit{Zhao Shuli wenji}, 1: 301-329; "Shi Bulan Drives a Cart" is anthologized in \textit{Zhao Shuli wenji}, 3: 1261-1296.

Ibid.
Finally, clapper arts and the folk lyric form (changci 唱詞) are major stylistic features of *Rhymes of Li Youcai* (Li Youcai banhua, 李有才板話 1943), Zhao's famous novella about land reform and the contrasting styles of two political workers. Zhao's inclusion of these stylistic elements in his fiction make it lively and folksy; they also augmented its entertainment value for the audiences in the base areas. In short, Zhao was not a mere imitator of tradition: he created a new and separate type of popular art form. Zhao's artistic achievements attracted the attention of Zhou Yang, the spokesman of the Chinese Communist Party on literary matters who praised Zhao as follows: "[Zhao Shuli's] language is the living language of the masses. He is no stickler for tradition but an innovator, a truly creative writer."11

The popular nature of the Shanyaodan School is apparent in another area of this fiction: the language of the Shanyaodan works which is markedly different from the Europeanized language of May Fourth, that is, it is closer to the language of the masses. This school is also closer stylistically to the ideal of the popularization of literature and of "literature going down to the countryside" first advocated by Mao Dun, Lu Xun and Li Dazhao in the 1930s. The figure of the peasant, who in this literature assumed a new and vital role, also augments the popular nature of this fiction. Cyril Birch describes the new role of the peasant in terms of the peasant "moving from his place in the wings, where he waited to perform briefly as buffoon or potential bandit, to the centre of the stage as a dramatic figure in his own right."12 These fictional developments can, in part, be attributed to the renewed usage of national forms and, in part, to the class background of the Shanyaodan writers which is of even more humble origin than the other writers of

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9 Anthologized in *Zhao Shuli wenji*, 2: 337-542.
10 Anthologized in *Zhao Shuli wenji*, 1: 17-61.
xiangtu wenxue discussed so far. Zhao Shuli, for instance, was the son of impoverished peasants and was a factory worker during his life. This background made him privy to the life and thought of the peasant which he transcribed into his fiction.

Ma Feng, the second major member of the Shanyaodan School after Zhao Shuli, also included elements in his fiction from the Chinese folk literature tradition. Ma acknowledged that as a young child he read the detective novels, *Cases of Judge Peng* (Peng Gong an 彭公案) and *Cases of Judge Shi* (Shi Gong an 施公案), as well as Ming and Qing vernacular fiction such as *Three Knights and Five Heroes* (San xia wu yi 三侠五義). Ma's novel, *Heroes of Lū and Liāng* (Lū-Liāng yìngxiong zhuan,呂梁英雄傳 1946), which he co-authored with Xi Rong, was modelled on the *Water Margin*. This work comprises narratives about the heroic struggles of the Chinese against Japanese aggression. Ma Feng, Zhao Shuli and other Shanyaodan writers also collected and edited large numbers of folk stories, folk songs and clapper arts in their original forms. The characteristic quality of brevity of these popular forms and their inclusion of colloquialism and peasant dialect exerted a stylistic influence on the fiction of these writers.

Both Zhao Shuli and Ma Feng spent time labouring in the countryside; both made use of this experience in certain aspects of their fiction. This Maoist principle of combining theory with practical work was the basis for further praise of Zhao on the part of Zhou Yang who commented that Zhao Shuli's stories marked the "successful realization of Mao Zedong's principles on literature and art." Zhao's experience in the countryside, termed "reeducation" by the Chinese Communists, took place as a rural Party worker when he went down to the countryside in China's impoverished hinterlands. During the war with Japan, Zhao Shuli and Ma Feng supervised village struggles against the landlords for rent.

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14. Zhou Yang, "Chao Shu-li and his Stories" 155.
reduction and land reform. Zhao also spent many years in the base areas involved in production, the building of cooperatives, propaganda and mobilization work. He not only parlayed this experience into material for his writing but he also wrote numerous theoretical articles discussing village work. Zhao acknowledged that this practical work was of equal if not greater value than his career as a writer. Zhao's *Rhymes of Li Youcai* was the product of research undertaken while he was in the countryside. Ma Feng's *Heroes of Lu-Liang* similarly resulted from that author's more than ten years' experience in China's rural areas.

Finally, the fusion of work and fiction was the source for the Shanyaodan's so-called "problem stories" (*wen ti xiaoshuo* 問題小說). Zhao Shuli explained that certain "problems" ("contradictions" in Maoist terms) arose during the process of village work which were not easily solved. Zhao made these problems into the subjects of his works; accordingly, he referred to many of his works as "problem stories." "Problem stories" have existed since May Fourth-- one example is the fiction of Bing Xin. More recently, they can be found in the Scar Literature (*shanghen wenxue* 傷痕文學) of the post-Cultural Revolution era. The "problem story" of the Shanyaodan school is different, however. These stories are based on real-life problems, the solutions to which pivot around which theoretical line to be adopted in order to arrive at a solution. The responsibility for assessing the correct theoretical line and for selecting the correct methodology to solve the problem lies, in Maoist theory, with the Party's rural workers. Other problems arise

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17 Zhao Shuli, "Dangqian chuangzuo zhong jige wenti," *Zhao shuli wenji*, 4: 1651.

18 The "contradiction" arising from the different working styles of Party cadres was a focal point of Mao Zedong's February 1957 speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People" delivered to the Eleventh Session of the Supreme State Conference. This speech dealt with "rectifying the working style" of the Chinese Communist Party and led to the Rectification Campaign of April 1957. This is an example of how closely writers such as Zhao Shuli followed each particular Maoist party line as it was formulated and used it as a basis of their fiction.
from the methodology and working style of the cadres and the intransigence of the peasants which are motifs in most of these stories. A typical example of a "problem story" is Zhao Shuli's "Training, Training" (Duanlian duanlian, 習練習練1958), a story about peasant intransigence and the problems which arose from the dictum of "to each according to his labour" which involved the uncertain rewards for labour. In this story, the commune member Xiao Tui Teng (Aching Calf) takes advantage of the situation engendered by this dictum to work only when it is profitable. Ultimately, she is criticized during the Rectification Campaign which brings the story to a close. Another type of "problem story" is Xi Rong's "Sister-in-Law Lai" (Lai Dasao, 赖大嫂1962). This story focuses on the problem of raising pigs in the commune with is both economically precarious and politically uncertain due to the constantly shifting policies of the Chinese Communist Party. Ultimately, Li Zhu Ma sells a pig and keeps the profits, and this prompts the other commune members to start raising pigs. Other "problems" reflected in Shanyaodan fiction were engendered by the remnants of "feudalistic" (in the Maoist usage of the term) rule in those villages which have been liberated, "boasting" (foukua feng 浮夸風) among party members and cadres, "leftist adventurism" (zuoqing maoxianzhuyi 左傾冒險主義) and "bureaucratism" (guanliaozhuyi 官僚主義) among the revolutionary army ranks. The latter is a motif in Zhao Shuli's Rhymes of Li Youcai.

In conclusion, the xiangtu wenxue of the Shanyaodan School is very different, both stylistically and thematically, from the various other examples of the xiangtu wenxue sub-genre. In general, all the different types of xiangtu wenxue are concerned with the life and hardships of the peasant; however, none besides the Shanyaodan fiction and works of the 1930s consciously aim at validating the peasants as the future masters of society.

19 Anthologized in Zhao Shuli wenji, 2: 763-785.
21 I am referring here to the writers such as Mao Dun, Sha Ding, Ai Wu, etc. whose works are not discussed in this dissertation.
Examples of *xiangtu wenxue* from other periods similarly focus on political issues, such as the class conflicts between the landlords and peasants; however, none of these are compelled to manipulate their form and content in order to comply with Party dictates regarding the representation of these conflicts in literature. Furthermore, the writers of these works were also not compelled to deal with the representation under Communist literary controls of the real-life problems that arose during the implementation of erroneous Party policies regarding the peasant. The works of the Shanyaodan writer Zhao Shuli, on the other hand, is concerned with these issues.

**Zhao Shuli**

Zhao Shuli's writing career began in the 1930s while the warlords were still struggling for national power and spanned a thirty-year period to the early 1960s. His greatest literary achievements, which include the short story "Blacky Gets Married," the novella *Rhymes of Li Youcai* and his two novels *Changes in Li Village* (Lijiazhuang de bianqian, 李家莊的變遷 1946) and *Three Mile Village*, were written from the time of the *Yan'an Talks* in 1942 to the year 1958. Prior to 1949, Zhao was active in the Taihang Mountain revolutionary base area of Shanxi province where he participated in various revolutionary activities. After 1951, he migrated to the urban centre to work but returned often to the base and to his home village near Jincheng in the heart of the base area to live and work. The close relationship that Zhao Shuli fostered with his village and with the peasants was maintained throughout much of his life. Zhao's depth of understanding

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22 Anthologized in *Zhao Shuli wenji*, 1: 71-194.


24 Ibid. Taihang was an anti-Japanese war base created by the Eighth Route Army in 1937 in the Taihang mountain range separating Hebei from Shanxi.
of the village compelled Zhou Yang to state that no other Chinese writer matched Zhao Shuli in his understanding of the peasant and the Chinese village.25

Upon the publication of Zhao Shuli's famous work "Blacky Gets Married," this story was hailed as a great success in the Chinese liberated areas. Unlike the current anti-Japanese propaganda literature, it held great appeal for the audiences in the base areas. In 1943, the same years of its publication, "Blacky Gets Married" was made into a folk opera, and it toured China, including the Guomindang and occupied areas.26 The theme of this story -- the struggle for free choice in marriage -- and the typicality of its characters were more universal than that found in the propaganda literature. "Blacky" thus enjoyed wide popular appeal.

There are a number of contrasting elements in "Blacky Gets Married" of a good-versus-evil, new-versus-old nature which are responsible for this story's dramatic quality. These elements lent themselves easily to dramatization. The first category comprises the two types of villains,27 the first of which are epitomized by the Jinwang brothers -- the village landlords in the story. These brothers struggle against the new "progressive" elements to gain advantage in the village. They avail themselves of the chaos brought about by village collectivization to set themselves up as cadres and thereby win power. On the basis of this, they also hope to win Xiao Qin who is the story's heroine. These brothers represent the excesses of the old regime and are the new "class enemies" who strive to undermine the advances of the revolution. In the end, the machinations of these brothers are exposed when the Chinese Communist Party steps in in the guise of the district government and engineers their demise.

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25 Zhou Yang, "Zhao Shuli wenji xu," Zhao Shuli wenji, 1:1.
In the second category of contrasting elements, the "new" elements are represented by Xiao Er Hei and Xiao Qin, the young couple who seek the freedom to marry. Their struggle against the "feudal" custom of arranged marriages is opposed by the two "old" elements, or the second type of villain, in the story. These are Er Zhuge (Zhuge the Second), the father of Xiao Er Hei, and San Xian Gu (Auntie Three the Witch), the mother of Xiao Qin. These two figures represent the backward, superstitious and self-seeking elements of China's old society which persist into the new. Er Zhuge is named after Zhuge Liang, the supreme strategist of the Three Kingdoms period. Like Zhuge Liang, he is also disposed to superstitious belief in divination and the Chinese zodiac which he uses to arrange others' fate, as it were. According to his calculations, the horoscopes of Xiao Er Hei and Xiao Qin "don't agree";28 thus he opposes their marriage. He subsequently makes arrangements for the daughter of a refugee to be Xiao Hei's wife—a proposition which is fiercely rejected by his son. At the conclusion of "Blacky Gets Married," Er Zhuge is publically shamed by his continuous wrong predictions and is compelled to agree to his son's marriage with Xiao Qin.

Sanxian Gu, on the other hand, opposes her daughter's love relationship for a different reason—she herself secretly lusts after Xiao Er Hei. For thirty years, San Xian Gu has acted as the village shamaness and is wont to dress and make herself up as a young woman. Eventually, she, too, is shamed by the district authorities and in the end calls off her daughter's arranged marriage to Brigadier Wu. The young couple triumph and their marriage is duly celebrated.29 One by one, the villains in this story meet their just deserts and descend from the stage—the Jinwang brothers, Er Zhuge and, finally, San Xian Gu.


29 Cyril Birch has perceptively observed that the Chinese Communist Party acts in loco parentis in arranging the young couple's marriage in this story. I am indebted to Professor Michael S. Duke for pointing this out to me.
This progression prompted Cyril Birch to state of "Blacky Gets Married" that "the metaphor from the theatre is inescapable."\textsuperscript{30}

Six months after the publication of "Blacky Gets Married," Zhao Shuli published the \textit{Rhymes of Li Youcai}, the work for which the author is best known. In the preface to this work, Zhao stated a propos the genre of "problem stories" that during the process of village work he encountered problems that were difficult to solve and made them the subject of his stories.\textsuperscript{31} He states further that he wrote \textit{Rhymes of Li Youcai} to put right those enthusiastic young colleagues or village cadres who did not understand the real situation in the rural villages and who were misled by superficial achievements.\textsuperscript{32} The "problems" Zhao mentions refer to the working style of the political or "mass worker" (\textit{qunzhong gongzuoyuan} or \textit{gongzuoyuan 群众工作員, work員}), usually referred to as cadre (\textit{ganbu 干部}), and their interpretation of government policy. The "achievements," on the other hand, comprised the small gains acquired in carrying out this policy.

The storyline in \textit{Rhymes of Li Youcai} takes place in the year 1937. In this year the land reform policy implemented by the Chinese Communist Party has been scaled down because of the more pressing concern of the war with Japan. What has taken the place of this policy is the movement in the villages for the reduction of rent and interest. In the words of one critic, this is the result of "national contradictions"\textsuperscript{33} taking precedence over "class contradictions." In order to meet the goals of the war effort, the economy of the country must produce a surplus, and this can be achieved only through efficient taxation, cooperation and mobilization of the various sectors of the people. In \textit{Rhymes}, the people in the "model village" of Yanjiashan are mobilized into

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\item \textsuperscript{30} Birch, "Chao Shu-li: Creative Writing in a Communist State" 189.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Zhao Shuli, "Dangqian chuangzuo zhong jige wenti" 1651.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid. 1950-51.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Chen Juan, "Zhao Shuli yu shanyaodan pai," \textit{Yuwen xuexi}, 4 (1987): 41.
\end{itemize}
peasant and anti-Japanese associations which play vital roles in the lowering of rents. Ultimately, these associations also succeed in the overthrow of the village landlord, Yan Xifu.

There are two rural political workers who play important roles in the story. The first is Comrade Zhang whose inexperience leads to his inadvertent collusion with the wily Yan. This results in a false measurement of land. These and other problems are rectified when the second worker, Comrade Yang, who is also the chairman of the county peasant association, is sent down to inspect the village and to assist with the harvest in the sixth district. After his brief inspection, Yang gives a correct assessment of the village, and, under his guidance, more support is won over for the peasant association; the land and cash that Yan had confiscated is redistributed; and even Li Youcai, the itinerant village balladeer, is given a proper job. What began as a bungled job by an inexperienced cadre ended with the achievement of the goals of "mass work."

Like "Blacky Gets Married," Rhymes of Li Youcai is lively, fast-paced and was a literary success at the time of its publication. This success was due not so much to the storyline as to the inclusion of clapper arts which reinforce the storyline and add comic-relief. The clapper arts in Rhymes are "witty and successful exercises in folk form," and they are credited with Zhao's success as a traditional kind of storyteller. The source for the clapper arts in the story is Li Youcai, the landless peasant whose gift of composing rhymes not only provides the illiterate cave-dwellers at the east end of the village with their main source of entertainment but also with their main source of information. In the mouth of Li Youcai, the clapper arts are also an effective editorial on the happenings in the village. The first introduction of this folk form comprises a comment on the annual mayoral elections, which, as was anticipated, results in the reelection of Yan Hengyuan:

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Oh, Yen Heng-yuan's our mayor, worse luck!
Our mayor is always Yen!
Ten years we've fallen in his snare...
Are we going to, again?
Each year we've voted, ten years now
With so much blah and fuss.
A new broom, so they say, sweeps clean,
But Yen sweeps the floor with us!

Then why not make a rubber stamp
With his name on for mayor?
'Twould surely serve us just as well,
And treat us just as fair!
Just stamp--no need to write a word--
As time for voting nears,
And it'd last, as good as new,
For years and years and years!35

Other clapper arts consist of sardonic comments on village personalities such as Yan Xifu, the "tiger on the prowl," and Zhang Degui, the "nasty little flatterer," and they are also put to good use to recruit people into the peasant association.

Zhao Shuli's Rhymes of Li Youcai represents the first work in the base areas to deal with the theme of the early stages of land reform and the "turning over" (fanshen 轉身) of the peasants. Zhao's longer novels, such as Changes in Li Village and Three Mile Village, lack the lively, spirited style of Rhymes of Li Youcai. The former has been described as a "run-of-the-mill indignant denunciation of landlord villainy."36 Changes in Li Village is an important work in terms of subject matter; however, the lack of unity and manifold subplots of this novel make it more ponderous and less readable than Zhao's shorter-length fiction.

Zhao wrote Changes in Li Village upon his return to his village at the end of the war with Japan, and the homecoming of Zhang Tiesuo in the book is also based on this event.37 Zhao's own village near Jincheng had suffered much during the previous several

35 Zhao Shuli, Rhymes of Li Yu-tsai, tr. Sidney Shapiro, in Rhymes of Li Yu-tsai and Other Stories 3-4.
36 Birch, "Chinese Communist Literature" 78.
37 Birch, "Chao Shu-li: Creative Writing in a Communist State" 193.
decades, first from its repeated domination by the Japanese, then by the Guomindang troops, the Communists and the warlord Yan Xishan, and Zhao was motivated by what he saw and heard to write a village history. The novel covers the years from 1928 to 1946; however, in the attempt to cover this vast sweep of political history and all the conflicts which took place between the various forces contending for power, the plot is somewhat disunified. Zhang Tiesuo—a figure who dominates the first part and promises to be the central protagonist for the novel—disappears halfway, only to reappear at the end as a zealous cadre, though his reeducation has been left unexplained. The novel furnishes grisly descriptions of wartime bloodshed and ends with the murder of Landlord Li who is torn limb from limb when liberation brings opportunities for revenge. *Changes in Li Village* was cited as "ideologically correct" by both Mao Dun and Zhou Yang; however, even they failed to see any serious literary merit in it.

*Three Mile Village*, on the other hand, is a more interesting and engrossing novel than *Changes in Li Village*. It was also the most popular among the novels responding to Mao Zedong's call for the acceleration of the transformation into agricultural cooperatives. On July 31, 1955, Mao, who at that time held dual posts of Chairman of the Chinese People's Republic and of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, delivered a speech, "The Question of Agricultural Cooperation," to a meeting of provincial, municipal and autonomous regional committees of the Party in which he castigated the leadership for failing to keep pace with the movement.

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38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Mao's speech begins with the words: "Throughout the Chinese countryside a new upsurge in the socialist mass movement is in sight. But some of our comrades are tottering along like a woman with bound feet, always complaining that others are going too fast. (Mao Zedong, "The Question of Agricultural Cooperation," in *Communist China, 1953-1959: Policy Documents with Analysis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965): 94.)
Initially, during the first phases of the transformation into agricultural cooperatives, Zhao Shuli echoed Mao's concern that cooperativization was not taking place fast enough, that is, he was in active agreement with the Party's policy regarding collectivization.\footnote{Katô Miyuki, "Guanyu Sanliwan de pingjia," tr. Gao Jie, Shanxi daxue xuebao, 2 (1987): 93.} However, after 1956 when the movement peaked, he perceived the imminent danger of collectivization to village life and economy. In 1956 and 1959, respectively, Zhao wrote two letters to Party authorities in which he articulated the contradiction as he perceived it between the fundamental policy of the central committee and the wishes of the peasants.\footnote{These two letters, "Gei Chang Zhi diwei x x de xin" (1956) and "Gei Shao Quanlin de xin" (1959) are included in Zhao's collected works, \textit{Zhao Shuli wenji}.} According to Zhao, the Party's understanding of the peasants on this point was far removed from reality. Other problems Zhao articulated were the same as those which he had raised earlier, for example, the attitude of the lower level cadres who were concerned only with transmitting orders from above. For these and other reasons, Zhao Shuli was heavily criticized and eventually killed during the Cultural Revolution.\footnote{Zhao's letters and other material which had originally been suppressed emerged only after Zhao was posthumously rehabilitated in 1978.} After \textit{Three Mile Village}, Zhao's voice differed radically from that of the Party.

\textit{Three Mile Village} is a novel about the transitional phase from mutual aid teams to agricultural cooperatives and foreshadows Zhao Shuli's public concerns about collectivization. The coverjacket of the 1955 Peking edition of \textit{Three Mile Village} outlines the plotline of this novel though it fails to mention the resistance on the part of the peasants to this program and the coercive role played by the Party in achieving its aims. The glorification of the socialist ideal is also absent from the original text. This summary is as follows:

\textit{Three Mile Bend} is a relatively remote village which is also short of water. To improve the productive environment of the area, the
village Agricultural Production Cooperative makes plans to activate the entire village for the opening up of an irrigation channel. Problems connected with the acquisition of land rights for the channel stir up an ideological struggle; and sandwiched into the action are the love and marriage relationships of three young couples. Contradictions and difficulties are extremely complicated and confused, but under the correct leadership of the Party the villagers succeed in overcoming their difficulties, complete the preparatory work on the channel, and by means of this work actively carry out forward-looking education in socialism among the masses.44

In real life, Sanliwan is a mountain village in the early liberated area of northern China. It was chosen as a model village during the land reform and mutual aid period, and in 1951 it organized one of the first agricultural producers' cooperatives.45 Like Zhao Shuli's other works, Three Mile Village was also based on the author's actual experiences working in the countryside, in this case, engaged in collective farming.46

The period of time covered in Three Mile Village is from September 1 to October 1, 1951. Three Mile Village is experiencing material and ideological problems obstructing the road to collectivization. The first set of problems are articulated as four words by Wang Jinsheng, the branch secretary and vice-chairman of the cooperative in the story. These are: "more," "big," "good" and "exploitation" (gao da hao bo 高大好剥) and stem from the early days of land reform. The narrator explains, "'More' meant those who had got rather more than they deserved during land reform. 'Big' meant the big families, 'good' those with good land. 'Exploit' meant those who still hired some labour."47 In other words, there are too many people to contend with, too little land, especially good land, and

44 Quoted in Birch, "Chinese Communist Literature" 78.
46 Zhao Shuli, "Sanliwan xiezuo qianhou," in Zhao shuli wenji , 4: 1481-1492.
the soil is of poor quality. These are the basic material factors underlying the larger, ideological problems of the village.

As always, the cadres are split into two opposing points-of-view over the means to persuade the four different households to enter the cooperative, and this constitutes the second set of problems outlined in the novel. One side maintains that the households in the mutual aid teams should be drawn into the cooperative, at which point the mutual aid teams would be slowly disbanded and the four different kinds of households would be isolated. They could then be guided into the cooperative. The opposing side contends that the leadership and education of the mutual aid teams should be increased, and at a certain point the whole team could then be mobilized into the cooperative. Whichever method the cadres decide to use, the problem of village irrigation has to be solved before the cooperative can be expanded. Ma Duoshou, a middle rich peasant in the story who is also known as Ma Hu Tutu (Muddlehead), was in possession of a vital piece of land called the "handle-land" because of its peculiar shape. Whether or not he gives this land over to the cooperative is a crucial factor in determining the digging of the irrigation ditches. Losing his handle-land would mean less power for his water wheel and less water for his land. Accordingly, he refuses to hand it over. Ma had joined the mutual aid team solely for the purpose of making use of the team's labour force on his land, and he is supported in his backward methods by another peasant who also did well during the land reform-- Fan Denggao, the village head and a backsliding party member. Fan Denggao, who engages in trading as a sideline activity, is strongly criticized at party branch meetings and is urged to give up his "capitalist tendencies" and "bourgeois ideas." At Ma Duoshou's criticism sessions, on the other hand, Ma argues that private ownership is still legal, and he will give up his land once socialism comes into existence. C.W. Shih sums up the characters in the novel as follows:

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48 Katô Miyuki 93-4.
Here we see a group of people opposed to collective farming: middle peasants and peasants who have "turned over" (fan-shen) since land reform and who are unwilling to give up their private possessions; peasants who believe in individual farming; and a backsliding Party member who engages in private trading.\textsuperscript{49}

In the end, Ma and Fan finally enter the cooperative. In Shih's words, these "recalcitrant farmers are all finally persuaded by words, examples, and action to join the march towards Socialism."\textsuperscript{50}

Meanwhile, Ma's progressive third daughter-in-law wishes to break away from her domination by this "feudal" household, headed by "Muddlehead" Ma and his "Always Right" wife (Chang You Li), and insists on a family division. In the process, the "handle-land" is given to the cooperative by the second son of the Ma household for the benefit of the irrigation project, and this part of the problem is resolved.

With the reformation of the backward peasants and the resolution of the irrigation project, \textit{Three Mile Village} draws to a hasty conclusion. This conclusion has been criticized by both Chinese and Japanese critics on two points. The first point is stylistic: the themes of establishing the cooperative, constructing the irrigation ditches and reforming Ma and Fan are interwoven with a subplot-- the three love relationships between a number of young people in the village-- which is not fully developed. The marriages of the three couples, which were dealt with only in the last few chapters, are sketchily drawn and serve only as a backdrop for the rest of the story. The second, and more important point, is ideological: Ma Duoshou and Fan Denggao's joining of the cooperative is not accompanied by a convincing change in their thought.\textsuperscript{51} The elimination of the rich peasant and "capitalist" tendencies were sore points in the building of socialism as Mao

\textsuperscript{49} C.W. Shih 198.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Katô Miyuki 94.
emphasized in a speech on contradictions given in 1957. In short, as a socialist realist novel, *Three Mile Village* did not set a good example in the treatment of these problems.

Soon after the publication of *Three Mile Village*, collectivization peaked in China, and the countryside was organized into peoples' communes. This, in turn, influenced the evolution of Zhao Shuli's criticism, which focused primarily on his handling of the figure of the rich peasant. One critic stated that "Although [Zhao Shuli] has always embraced earnest hopes for the progress of the peasants, he does not purposefully etch an image of the peasants as being easily persuaded or being able to correctly understand anything."

At first, Zhao agreed that Fan Denggao's conversion was not explained in the novel. Zhao enumerated three defects in the novel, the third of which concerned his feeling that he had not sufficiently dealt with the "bad function of the rich peasant in the village" (*funong zai nongcun zhong de huai zuoyong*). At the same time, he wondered if it was necessary to deal with this issue and later denied that this constituted a problem in the novel. Zhao also complained that he was expected to write about the mischief-making of the landlord, and that this constituted a restriction for writers attempting to write realistically about the village. In short, the

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52 The contradiction between the working class and the "national bourgeoisie" constituted the second point in Mao Zedong's speech, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People."

53 Katô, 96.

54 Jin Wuxiu, "Zhongguo de guangrong yu beican: Zhao shuli pingzhuan," quoted in Katô Miyuki 94.

55 Zhao Shuli, "Sanliwan xiezuo qianhou" 1491-92.

56 The full text of this quotation is as follows:

> I feel that there are always bonds restricting the writer,... and there are others who criticized me for not writing about the mischief-making of the landlord in *Three Mile Village*. It seems that whoever writes about the village must write about the mischief-making of the landlord.

(Quoted in Katô Miyuki 96.)
absence of a change of thought on the part of Ma Duoshou and Fan Denggao implies that these peasants were coerced into the cooperative, and, with hindsight, this may be the most realistic part of *Three Mile Village*. Collectivization was fully implemented in China, and China's peasants went along with it without necessarily believing in it. Later, the egregious nature of the Party's agricultural policies proved these peasants right.

In 1959, the same year that "Training, Training" was published, Zhao retracted his previous statement concerning *Three Mile Village* and reaffirmed what he considered was the correct position of this novel. In that year, there was a furious debate surrounding the depiction of the people's internal contradictions in art. Zhao issued this statement regarding *Three Mile Village*: "This novel criticizes capitalist thinking and rightist conservative thinking and was written for the sake of the people's internal contradictions. It is wrong when some people say that there are no contradictions in it between ourselves and the enemy. I don't agree with that."

"Training, Training" spurred on other arguments surrounding Zhao Shuli's fiction. This time, Zhao was accused of over-emphasizing backward peasants in his fiction and "uglifying" the image of the class that was supposed to be the force behind the revolution. Zhao strove for typicality in his representation of the peasant, and this involved his depiction of their "selfish" nature, or, in Engels' words, their "self-sufficient economic ideology." Unfortunately, this type of representation called down upon Zhao the charge that he was distorting the face of the peasant. Finally, in the wake of the Anti-Rightist campaign of 1957-58, Zhao was accused of betraying the goals of the revolution. In short, Zhao became known as a writer of "middle characters" (*zhongjian renwu* 中間人物), a charge which was dropped only in 1978 with Zhao Shuli's posthumous rehabilitation.
"Middle Characters" and "Training, Training"

In September 1959, an article appeared in *Wenyi bao* entitled "How Literary Works Reflect the Internal Contradictions of the People" which cited Zhao Shuli's "Training, Training" as a model work. Shortly thereafter, however, in the wake of the Dalian Conference on Short Stories with Village Themes, "Training, Training" became a whip for the extreme leftist tide of thought which had assumed control over the arts. The conflict centred around the depiction of the so-called "middle characters."

The question of "middle characters" was originally affirmed by the critic Shao Quanlin who stated that there should be more stories about "middle characters" which would make Chinese fiction more pluralistic. He cited "Training, Training" as a positive example. This viewpoint, however, soon became labelled as a "capitalist literary view" (*zichan jieji de wenyi zhuzhang* 資本階級的文學主張), and "Training, Training" became disparaged as a specimen of work in which "middle characters" were wrongly extolled. When this brand of criticism peaked during the Cultural Revolution, "Training, Training" became labelled as a "poisonous weed," and Zhao Shuli himself was criticized as the "grand old master of middle characters" (*zhongjian renwu de zushiye* 中間人物的祖師爺). In the final analysis, however, the "middle character" figure is one of the more interesting and realistic aspects of Zhao's fiction.

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58 "Wenyi zuopin ru he fanying renmin neibu maodun"  
59 Dalian nongcun ticai duanpian xiaoshuo chuanguo zuotanhui  
60 Ibid.  
61 Ibid.
"Training, Training" revolves around the exploits of two female characters: Xiao Tui Teng and Chibubao (Can't Get Enough to Eat). Xiaotui Teng is a woman whose household consists of a son, daughter-in-law and a young grandchild. At first, Xiao Tui Teng cooked the meals and babysat her grandchild so that the daughter-in-law could go into the fields to labour. Later, she refused to work and insisted on the daughter-in-law doing domestic chores, such as fetching water, fetching the chamberpot, sweeping, dusting, cooking, serving, etc., besides waiting on her. In the meantime, before the harvesting was complete, Xiao Tui Teng would avail herself of the opportunity to go into the fields to do "initiative labour" (pianyi huo 便宜活), in other words, to steal. When there was real work to be done, however, her "aching calf" would conveniently flare up. This was also the case when the family entered the commune: Xiao Tui Teng's aching calf would conveniently assert itself when the family had not fulfilled its work quota.

The second character, Chibubao, on the other hand, was a woman in her thirties. The trademark of Chibubao was her concern over food. Originally, she was one of the best in the "vying for achievement" (zhengxian she 爭先釵) of her commune; however, her achievements soon became her personal burden. When Chibubao married, one of the conditions she raised was that she would not go into the fields to work, and when the system of state purchase of rice was implemented, she started complaining that she was not getting enough to eat. To avoid collective labour, she would say: "There is not enough rice. At every meal I must wait for Zhang Xin to finish eating before I can scrape the bottom of the pan. I really cannot work." 62 Ultimately, Chibubao and Xiaotui Teng are struggled against and targeted for criticism during the story's Rectification Campaign.

The furious debate concerning the story "Training, Training" centred on its image of these two peasant women. While some critics praised the work for presenting the

62 Zhao Shuli, "Duanlian duanlian" 766.
unvarnished truth about peasant life, others condemned it for a number of reasons, including the charge that Zhao Shuli was "slandering rural women." The latter critics were offended primarily because Zhao Shuli had surreptitiously engineered the story by shifting it out of the comic mode and into the ironic mode.\(^6\) None of these critics, however, realized Zhao's main point, which was that China's rural women were being mistreated. This realization on the part of the critics was precluded by the conceptual limitation of the Marxist tools of literary criticism, the political rhetoric of the day and the public image of Zhao as a loyal socialist.

The criticism of Xiao Tui Teng and Chibubao during "Training, Training"'s Rectification Campaign is not the only theme in this story. A second theme is the conflict in working methods between the cadres of the agricultural cooperative. The coop leader, Wang Juhai, who is also a middle peasant, has the unfortunate tendency of "employing people according to their character (zhuzhang an xingge yong ren 按性張用人)." He is also the arbiter of disputes and is given to "not showing (good) reasons when arbitrating" (heshi bu biaoli 事不表理). The question of internal contradictions found its way into the storyline of "Training, Training," and Wang Juhai was once again called upon to settle disputes on behalf of the villagers, which he did so again in his usual style of minimizing confrontations. This earned him the nickname of "heshi lao" 和事佬 -- the "peacemaker" who is more concerned with putting an end to the bickering than with settling the issue. In the changing times, Wang Juhai's traditional methods of arbitrating are no longer needed, and furthermore, his methods inadvertently reinforce the behaviour of Xiao Tui Teng and Chibubao. Wang is criticized by the branch secretary, Wang Zhenhai, who comments that Wang's protection of these two characters has made them "ungovernable," and that he must "train, train" himself (duanlian duanlian), that is, struggle to overcome his backward working methods.

\(^6\) I am indebted to Dr. Josephine Matthews, the Zhao Shuli scholar, for these points about "Training, Training." They were conveyed to me through personal correspondence.
Zhao Shuli stated that one reason he wrote "Training, Training" was his wish to criticize the peacemaking thought problems of the middle peasant cadres. At the same time, it is clear that he positively affirmed certain cadres, such as Wang Zhenhai, and the working methods of Yang Xiao Si (Yang Number Four)-- the cadre who led the attack against Xiao Tui Teng and Chibubao. In essence, Zhao's treatment of the different working methods of party cadres was based on his experience working in the countryside. One critic claims that, on the basis of this experience, Zhao Shuli was "seeking truth from facts" (shishi qui shi 實事求事); thus it is ridiculous to conclude that "Training, Training" constitutes "an insult to socialism."65

Zhao Shuli's second reason for writing "Training, Training" concerned the question of "middle characters." Zhao stated that by writing about characters such as Xiao Tui Teng and Chibubao in "Training, Training" he hoped to raise the consciousness of this type of person in real life and thus reform him or her.66 Besides these two, other "middle characters" include Ma Duoshou and his wife, Chang You Li, in Three Mile Village and Er Zhuge and San Xian Gu in the story "Blacky Gets Married." These characters can be considered backward, stubborn or "feudal" in the Maoist sense of the term; nonetheless, they are also lively and entertaining and, as fictional characters, leave the reader with a strong impression. They are also typical, that is, they successfully reflect true personality types-- the xiaozibeixiaozibeihaozi 詩子輩--in the same way that Lu Xun's Ah Q is a typical Chinese Everyman. In Lu Xun's case, however, that author was never charged with uglifying the face of the peasant or with betraying the goals of the revolution. Lu Xun wrote about the dark side of society, pointing out social problems and thereby bringing them to general attention-- a perspective which was in line with the historic role of the writer in China. For

64 Zhao Shuli, "Dangqian chuangzuo zhong jige wenti 1651.

65 Dong Dazhong 89, 90.

66 Zhao stated: "I felt that the best way was to lay out the facts, to let them see, to raise their consciousness a degree." (Zhao Shuli 1652.)
Zhao Shuli to write about this dark side, however, in the eyes of the Party, was tantamount to betraying socialism. Yao Wenyuan of the Gang of Four, for instance, charged that "middle characters" "obliterated and denied the objects praised by the socialist arts" and "elevated the position of capitalism." In sum, the accusation Zhao Shuli was charged with stemmed from the role that literature was compelled to play under the Chinese Communist Party and his refusal to go along this this. Zhao's works did not betray socialism; they did, however, threaten the interests of the Party.

By way of conclusion, the question might be asked: What kind of a socialist was Zhao Shuli? Throughout his life Zhao was popularly considered to be loyal to socialism. Some of the critics were similarly in the business of building Zhao up as a life-time member of the Chinese Communist camp. Ultimately, however, Zhao Shuli's loyalty lay not so much with any particular ideology as with whatever would draw China's peasants out of their indigence and benighted worldview. His dream was for a good life for the peasants and for whatever would put an an end to their ongoing, grinding poverty. Zhao Shuli supported the Chinese Communists because he believed that they possessed an answer to China's rural problem and could ease the peasants' poverty. From works such as *Three Mile Village* and "Training, Training," one can surmise that he was opposed not so much to the policies of collectivization as to its draconian, authoritarian implementation which overrode the interests of the peasants. In order for collectivization to work, Zhao believed, it must be voluntary. This, however, was not the case, and the fact that Zhao depicted the Party's authoritarianism called down upon him charges of distorting reality and of being disloyal to socialism. In sum, as a writer of *xiangtu wenxue*, Zhao's ultimate loyalty lay with the peasant, not with a political cause, and with the alleviation of peasant oppression which has historically been the peasants' burden and remains so to this day.

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Ma Feng and Zhou Libo

As mentioned earlier, Zhao Shuli exercised great influence over the younger generation of writers in China, especially those in the northern liberated areas. Like Zhao, many of these writers participated in revolutionary work which became a source of inspiration for their creativity. Ma Feng is one example of this.

A native of Xiaoyi, Shaanxi province, Ma Feng first went to Yan'an at the young age of fifteen. During his lifetime he worked as a "people's soldier" (zide bing 子弟兵) and propaganda worker. After studying for two years in a training class for literary arts workers in the Lu Xun Academy of Arts, Ma was sent to the anti-Japanese base area at the Jin-Sui border region where he participated in the war effort. With the beginning of World War II, the Japanese had stepped up their offensive in collusion with Yan Xishan. Ma Feng—who by then was only twenty—worked in a munitions factory established by the Chinese Communist Party, and he became involved in organizing unions in the factory, assisting in the production of a newspaper and in the organizing of a drama troupe.

In 1943, during the movement to reduce rents, Ma Feng joined a workers team and went into the villages. There, he attended a meeting for rural workers in China's outlying areas which inspired him to begin writing. Besides yanggeju --the popular rural folk opera form revived during the Yan'an period-- Ma Feng also began to write short stories and poetry. Later, he was transferred back to the border region at Jin-Sui as the

68 Jiatofu (The original name of this Russian critic is unknown to me.), "Lun Ma Feng de chuangzuo daolu," tr. Song Shaoxiang, Pipijingia, 1:3 (August 1985): 66.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid. 67.
71 Ibid.
editor of Dazhong bao. There he produced his first novel, Heroes of Lü and Liang, which he co-authored with Xi Rong, another young writer in that area.

*Heroes of Lü and Liang* is based on real-life material about the people in the liberated areas of the Lü-Liang mountain area and their struggles against the Japanese. This novel is considered one of China's most successful war stories which is due in part to the freedom of vision writers still enjoyed prior to the increasing leftism in the arts during the Anti-Rightist campaign. One of the features of this novel is its indebtedness to popular literary forms-- the trademark of Shanyaodan fiction discussed earlier. This includes, for instance, the type of practical joke played upon one's enemy found in traditional fiction, such as the use of women as wiles, men disguised as women to trick the enemy, surprise attacks sprung upon the enemy in the dead of night, and others. The authors culled these stories from the local area and incorporated them into their novel which augmented its popularity.

After the war ended, Ma Feng returned again to the villages as a member of a work team when land reform began in 1947. Ten years later, he finally returned permanently to his home town. He remained there as a cadre engaged in secretarial work at the lower levels of party organization while he continued to write short stories. "My First Superior" (Wode di yige shangji, 我的第一個上司1959), a typical piece of Shanyaodan xiangtu wenxue, was written at this time. Like Zhao Shuli's *Three Mile Village*, "My First Superior" also deals with the theme of irrigation problems and the expansion of the agricultural cooperatives.

The themes of land reform and collectivization were also the concerns of a writer outside the Chinese liberated area. This was Zhou Libo. Zhou was not a member of the

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72 Li Chi, "Communist War Stories," in *Chinese Communist Literature* 144.

Shanyao dan School of the Shanxi-Shaanxi area; instead, his regional affiliations lay with his native province of Hunan. Nonetheless, Zhou's works exercised considerable influence, and they similarly contributed to the legacy of Chinese Communist *xiangtu wenxue*.

Zhou Libo's writings, which include the novels *Hurricane* (Baofeng zhouyu, 暴風驟雨 1948) and *Great Changes in a Mountain Village* (Shanxiang jubian, 山鄉巨變 1959), focus on the rise of the Communists to power during their struggle with the Guomindang, the land reform and the various stages of collectivization. They are marked with a sense of historic mission, and while they are less complex than Zhao Shuli's, they also exhibit many of the same revolutionary, realistic and artistic features as Zhao's.

Like Zhao Shuli, Zhou Libo also headed a school of writers who can be considered as *xiangtu zuojia*. This was the Camelia School (*Chazihua liupai* 茶花花流派) which was made up of a younger generation of Hunan writers. One of these was Gu Hua 古華 who exhibited the stylistic features of this school long after it was defunct. Zhou's classification as a *xiangtu zuojia* stems in part from the regional affiliation of the Camelia School and in part from his classification as a Communist writer writing about peasant socialist themes during the first part of Communist rule. However, Zhou Libo also exhibits certain other nativist features in his fiction which he shares in common with *xiangtu wenxue* from Lu Xun on. These features include the use of dialect, which is most pronounced in *Hurricane*, and the lyrical descriptions of Zhou Libo's native village in the Hunan mountain areas which provides the setting for *Great Changes in a Mountain Village*.

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74 *Hurricane* is anthologized in *Zhou Libo wenji* (Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1981), 1: 5-514; *Great Changes in a Mountain Village* is anthologized in *Zhou Libo wenji*, 3: 3-660.


76 Ibid. 87-88.
As we have seen before, the inclusion of the author's home village as the fictional setting of a work is typical of Chinese and Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue.

Zhou Libo was born in a village in Yiyang county, Hunan Province. As a young man, he lived and worked in Shanghai prior to being arrested by the Guomindang in 1932. After his release in 1934, Zhou became a member of the League of Left-Wing Writers which was the major source of formative influences on the development of his thought. Zhou was admitted into the Chinese Communist Party during this time and worked as a journalist and translator; he also worked as a teacher at the Lu Xun Academy at Yan'an. During the Cultural Revolution, Zhou was accused of having slandered Lu Xun; however, he survived the Cultural Revolution and died in 1979.

Like Zhao Shuli and Ma Feng, Zhou Libo derived inspiration for his creativity from his participation in revolutionary work. Zhou participated in the land reform movement in Shangzhi County, Heilongjiang Province, in 1946, and he wrote Hurricane based on this experience after 1947 when he returned to Harbin. This novel became one of the most widely-acclaimed of Zhou's works, and it was awarded the Stalin Prize, third rank, in 1951. Zhou stated his purpose in writing Hurricane as follows:

[I wished] to use the lively and rich material I had collected during the land reform in the Northeast to describe how our Party, for more than twenty years, had been leading the people in the great and bitter struggle against imperialism and feudalism, and to depict the peasants' happiness and sorrows during this period, so as to educate and inspire the revolutionary masses as a whole.

77 Ibid. 87.
79 Ibid.
In his preface to *Hurricane*, Zhou Libo describes how the land reform was already in progress when he arrived in China's Northeast in the winter of 1946. At that time, the Northeast Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was calling upon government workers to go to the countryside to assist in this mass movement. In the same preface, Zhou stated that the central concern of the movement was the contradiction between the landlords and the peasants and that the success of the land reform was the crucial determinant in the success of the socialist revolution. Accordingly, Zhou plunged himself, "heart and soul into the struggle"; thoughts of writing a novel occurred only later.

In essence, *Hurricane* is about the "turning over" of the peasants in the village of Yuanmao Tun in China's Northeast. In terms of theme, this novel is comparable to Ding Ling's *The Sun Shines over the Sanggan River* (Taiyang zhao zai Sanggan he shang, 太陽照在桑乾河上 1948) which was also awarded the Stalin Prize, second rank, in the same year as *Hurricane*. Both novels are set during the period from the May Fourth Directive issued by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in the year 1946 to the nation-wide meeting about land reform which took place in September, 1947. The second part of *Hurricane*, however, continues on from the publication of the *Outline Land Law of China* in October, 1947 and ends with the intensification of the land reform in Yuanmao Tun in 1948. There are other differences between these novels, such as the greater degree of "romanticism" found in *Hurricane* as opposed to the strict socialist realism of Ding Ling's novel.

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82 Ibid.


84 Zhongguo tudi fa dagang 中國土地法大綱
In both novels, the successful "turning over" of the peasants stems from their degree of political consciousness—more acute among the poor peasants—that the landlords constitute their main obstacle in their path toward liberation. Whether the peasants actually acted on this awareness to secure their liberation constituted another issue altogether. Zhou points out in *Hurricane* that the centuries-long "feudal" control dominating the peasants made them meek; accordingly, their struggle to wrest free from this thought is a pivotal point determining the success of the movement. *Hurricane* details the different stages of success in the land reform movement, the confiscation of landlord land and property and the landlords' resumption of power which takes place with their collusion with bandits and other "bad elements."

A second focus of *Hurricane* is its description of the land reform teams sent down by the district committees, their involvement in the peasantry and their efforts to instigate movements to overthrow the landlords and to redress past wrongs inflicted by the landlords. As in Zhao Shuli's works, the members of the work teams are either progressive or they are characterized by backsliding. In Zhou Libo's novels, this is less a matter of different working styles than of the particular character of each team member. When a progressive team member teams up with a poor peasant, this constitutes a vital force in the advancement of the movement. A recurring motif in *Hurricane* is the martyrdom of certain ideal peasant characters who possess great integrity. This is a type of romanticism mentioned above.

As mentioned above, Zhou Libo made extensive use of dialect in *Hurricane*, which is a feature typical of *xiangtu wenxue*. Zhou Libo is less "folksy" in this respect than Zhao Shuli; however, he was prompted to use the colloquial language of the peasant in order to popularize his literature. The concept of the popularization of literature was originally articulated by Lao She whose use of the Beijing dialect was a powerful reflector of Beijing social life and customs. Lao She theorized that the language of the masses was the only
language suitable to convey the thought of the people. Zhou Libo realized that the overuse of local dialect could pose difficulties for readers; nevertheless, he justified his use of dialect by supplying annotated explanations for the more uncommon words and phrases.85 In Hurricane, the carter, Lao Sun Tou, is the main source of peasant dialect, slang and colloquialisms typical of the Northeast region.

Zhou Libo's second major work, Great Changes in a Mountain Village, constitutes a sister novel to Hurricane, that is, what began historically in Hurricane is continued in the second novel. In Great Changes in a Mountain Village, the focus is on the transformation into agricultural cooperatives which, as far as the peasants are concerned, represents another major revolution second only to the land reform. As stated above, this novel is set in the author's home village in Hunan province, and it takes place during the winter of 1955. Like Zhao Shuli's Three Mile Village, it was also written as a response to the government's call for collectivization, particularly, Mao Zedong's "Question of Agricultural Cooperation."

Great Changes in a Mountain Village begins with Deng Xiumei, the district committee secretary, going down to the village of Qingqi in the year 1955 in order to help organize agricultural producers' cooperatives. The villagers have not yet even been organized into mutual aid teams, and they argue against the new changes, saying: "If a mother gives birth to nine sons, they and the mother would together have ten minds." 一簾生九子,九子連媳十�헌心 86 In other words, the villagers do not see the likelihood of working together cooperatively. As in Three Mile Village, collectivization demands that the peasants abandon their private economic interests, that is, give up the land they received

85 There are more than 270 such annotations in Hurricane. (Qu Yanbin, "Kan xi xunchang zui qijue cheng ru rongyi que jianxin: Baofeng zhouchu zhong de fangyan suyu qiantan jiantan xiangtu wenxue de yuyan wenti," Dongbei xiandai wenxue shilao, 9 (1984): 108.) A typical instance of Dongbei dialect is the expression "heshang cuole larou, luan lizi li" which describes someone rushing about anxiously. Such annotation is also frequent in the literature of the "Searching for Roots Movement" (Xungen pai) of the 1980s.

86 Zhou Libo 64.
during the land reform. In this novel, the cadres are also compelled to devise ways to deal with the resistance they encounter on the part of the peasants to this policy. Gradually, the peasants' resistance is worn down, and after one month the cadres succeed in organizing five cooperatives. This has been achieved largely through the efforts of Deng Xiumei, Li Yuehui, who is the village branch secretary, and the radical group surrounding them.

As in *Three Mile Village*, *Great Changes in a Mountain Village* also describes the progressive and not-so-progressive forces in the village and the struggles that take place between them. On the one hand, Deng Xiumei performs her task with dexterity and courage, and Li Yuehui is even more outstanding. Born into a poor peasant family, Li is a party member and has been given the nickname Poppozi (Old Mother) because of his tendency to mother everyone. This village branch secretary commits a rightist error but he is loyal to the Party and has the trust of the villagers. On the other hand, the less progressive forces conspire to perpetuate their interests in the village.

Zhou Libo's novel also shares another feature with Zhao Shuli's fiction, and that is its depiction of the wavering of the middle peasants and the hedging of the poor peasants who are opposed to the radical changes of collectivization. Ting Mianhu (Ting Flour Paste), for example, is a poor peasant who derived great benefit from the land reform; however, he is opposed to the mutual aid teams and unknowingly comes under the influence of certain bad elements. The fact that he and other peasants in the novel resist collectivization stems in part from their unwillingness to let go of their small economic advantage gained after centuries of deprivation. A larger reason, however, lies with the lack of faith on the part of these peasants in the Party and of the Party's agricultural program for the countryside. This aspect of the novel reflects not only the author's understanding of the Chinese peasant gained from his experience working in the countryside but also his doubts about the leftist leadership over the peasantry. These doubts are also apparent in his depiction of certain aspects of the character Li Yuehui. In
the words of one critic, *Great Changes in a Mountain Village* foreshadows the consequences of blind leadership and the problems stemming from "eating out of one pot."

In conclusion, the post-Yan'an period of *xiangtu wenxue* is primarily concerned with peasant socialist themes. Many of these themes are structured around a pair of binary opposites— the "progressive" elements such as Party cadres and peasant Party members, on the one hand, and backsliding Party members and intransigent peasants who oppose any change which they feel jeopardizes their economic interests, on the other. The Chinese Communist Party is always present in these stories and functions to bring about some kind of resolution to these opposites. In "Blacky Gets Married," for instance, the Party acts as a *deus ex machina*, manipulating circumstances for the good: the downfall of the Jinwang brothers and the marriage of Xiao Er Hei and Xiao Qin. In works such as *Three Mile Village* and *Great Changes in a Mountain Village*, on the other hand, the Party functions as an autocratic power exerting draconian means to compel the peasants to fall in with its wishes; it thereby achieves its policies in the countryside. This type of binary opposite and its resolution is absent from other instances of *xiangtu wenxue* and is a stylistic feature which makes post-Yan'an *xiangtu wenxue* unique in this fictional sub-genre.

Another feature differentiating post-Yan'an *xiangtu wenxue* from other types of *xiangtu wenxue* is the political circumstances surrounding the writing of the former. This is absent in other types of *xiangtu wenxue* which are characterized by a style free from the dictates of politics. Socialist realism ruled the arts in China beginning in 1942 with the *Yan'an Talks* and prescribed that writers depict a certain type of peasant— one who welcomed the Party's policies in the countryside. In the fiction of Zhao Shuli and Zhou Libo, this was not the case, however; on the contrary, the peasant representation of these authors moved beyond the narrow confines prescribed by socialist realism and into a more

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87 "Zhou Libo xueshu taolunhui zongshu" 88.
humane and realistic domain. With historical hindsight, we know that the brand of socialism of these authors had the peasants' interests more at heart than that of the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese Communist Party came into power on the basis of its charlatan peasant interests and used these interests as a ploy in the manipulation of power. The real tragedy of modern Chinese history is that, to date, there has never yet been a party or power in authority in China which takes the true interests of the peasants to heart. The *xiangtu wenxue* of the post-Yan'an period illustrates the truth of this statement.

**Hehuadian School and Sun Li 孫犁 (1913–)**

The Hehuadian School was the second school of *xiangtu wenxue* to emerge during the post-Yan'an years. This school, which is associated with Hebei, was headed by Sun Li who was a less political writer than Zhao Shuli or Zhou Libo. Sun Li also paid considerably more attention to questions of artistic style.

Sun Li's style was emulated by a number of younger writers in his region, including Liu Shaotang 劉少棠 (1921–) and Han Yingshan 韓映山 who were especially attracted to the lyrical quality of Sun Li's best-known work, "Lotus Creek" (Hehuadian, 荷花淀, 1944). These three writers are accordingly referred to as the Hehuadian School. Sun Li himself prefers to be called a writer of "national literature" rather than as a *xiangtu zuojia*; nonetheless, this writer has been classified as a *xiangtu zuojia* by Chinese critics who maintain that *xiangtu wenxue* is a distinct literary school.

Sun Li's writing career spanned the several decades beginning from the war of resistance against Japan and the civil war (1946-49) up to the post-1949 period. Like the

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89 Sun Li, "Guanyu 'xiangtu wenxue'," *Beijing wenxue*, 5 (1981): 34. Sun wrote this article in response to his follower, Liu Shaotang, whose view of *xiangtu wenxue* as a literary school differed from his mentor's.

These critics include Professor Yan Jiayen (Beijing University) and Lei Da, among others.
writers of the Shanyaodan School, Sun Li's influences also derived from China's popular, storytelling tradition. These influences are broader and more diverse than those found in the Shanyaodan School and include the classical short story, the Ming and Qing vernacular novel and the "jottings" (biji 筆記 and zaji 隨記) prose form.\(^90\) Sun Li was also influenced by the Tang and Song chuanqi, the Jingu qiguan, *Story of the Stone* and the philosophical essays of Liu Zongyuan.\(^91\) He was drawn to the language of Pu Songling which he admired for its liveliness and "unembellished precision" and was also attracted to Zhuangzi.\(^92\) As for modern literature, Sun Li studied Lu Xun, to which he attributed the "sketching" (baimiao 白描), impressionistic quality of his own work, and Pushkin and Chekhov.\(^93\) Sun Li was less a writer concerned with political themes per se than a stylist influenced by the various literary traditions outlined above.

Sun Li is a native of Anping, Hebei, and he spent several years in Anxin in the same province where he worked as a teacher.\(^94\) In Anxin, he became familiar with the Baiyangdian region on the Hebei Plain which is formerly a part of the Shanxi-Qahar-Hebei Border Region and Central Hebei. This region provided him with material for his collection of stories, *Reminiscences of Baiyangdian* (Baiyangdian jishi, 白洋淀記事), 1958), which includes his most popular works.


\(^93\) Ibid.


\(^95\) Huang Zhongwen 105, 104.

\(^96\) *Zhongguo da baikewanxue*, II: 817.
With the outbreak of war in 1937, Sun Li joined the resistance effort against Japan and did cultural work under the Party leadership in the Shanxi-Qahar-Hebei base area. In 1939, he was transferred to the Fuping mountain area where he worked as a correspondent, editor and teacher and also began writing. In Sun Li’s words: "I saw the peasants, and their patriotism and courage in joining the war deeply moved me." Accordingly, Sun Li began writing about the peasants. In 1944, Sun Li went to Yan’an where he worked in the Lu Xun Academy of Arts and published his short stories "Lotus Creek" and "The Reed Marshes" (Luhua dang, 蓮花蕩 1945). These stories were the first to gain him the attention of the literary world. At the end of the war, Sun Li returned to the rural villages of the central Hebei region where he continued to write short stories and essays; he also took part in the work of land reform. After 1949, Sun became an editor of Tianjin ribao and also wrote his longer works: the novel, Stormy Years (Fengyun chu ji, 風雲初記, 1962) and the novella The Blacksmith and the Carpenter (Tiemu qianzhuan, 鐵木前傳 1956).

Reminiscences of Baiyangdian is a sociopolitical narrative about the Shanxi-Qahar-Hebei region and the participation by the people of this region in the armed resistance against Japan. This collection also includes stories about the land reform movement and mutual aid teams, the labour and production of that area and the changes in social customs

95 Ibid.
96 Sun Li, Wenxue he shenghuo de lu,” Wenyi bao, 6 (1980), quoted in Huang Zhongwen 102.
97 Anthologized in Baiyangdian jishi 243-249.
98 Ibid.
99 Stormy Years is anthologized in Sun Li wenji (Tianjin: Baimia wenyi chubanshe, 1981), 2: 5-410; The Blacksmith and the Carpenter is anthologized in Sun Li wenji, 1: 387-452.
of the people of Baiyangdian. As a narrative set in the author's home province of Hebei and based on Sun Li's personal experience, *Reminiscences of Baiyangdian* is a typical work of *xiangtu wenxue*. "Lotus Creek" in this collection is Sun Li's most representative work.

"Lotus Creek" is set against the backdrop of the war of resistance. It is a simple, highly lyrical account of the affectionate marital relationships between the men and women of Lesser Reed Village. The young men of the village have just joined the army, and, hearing that they haven't yet gone to the front, their wives take a small boat and paddle across to Ma Village, ostensibly to send them supplies but really to see them. Their boat inadvertently gets drawn into an ambush set by the men against the Japanese, and a tragedy is narrowly averted. After this incident, the women decide that they cannot be outdone by their husbands and learn how to use rifles. When the Japanese attempt to mop up the marshlands, the women work hand in glove with the army, "slipping fearlessly in and out of the sea of reeds."100 These characters are sketched in the impressionistic style reminiscent of the landscape artist Ni Can; nonetheless, these sketches are also sufficient to convey an image of robustness and the spirit of self-sacrifice demanded by wartime.

The opening passage of "Lotus Creek" is one of the most highly lyrical examples of Sun Li's prose. The work opens with a summer night in the year 1940, and the wife of Shusheng, chief of the anti-Japanese guerrillas of Lesser Reed, is waiting for her husband to return home. Only the omniscient narrator knows that on this night Shusheng will inform his wife that he has joined up:

The young woman in the yard was plaiting a mat, seated on the long stretch of it already accomplished where she seemed enthroned on virgin snow or on a fleecy cloud. From time to time she strained her eyes towards the creek, another world of silver white. Light,
translucent mist had risen over the water, and the breeze was laden with the scent of fresh lotus leaves. The gate was still open -- her husband wasn't home yet.\textsuperscript{101}

Sun Li's minimalism is even more apparent in the short story "Parting Advice" (\textit{Zhu fu}, 1946).\textsuperscript{102} Shuisheng, a young peasant from Baiyangdian Lake, had been married only a short time when he decided to join the Eighth Route Army. He has not seen his wife, who was pregnant at the time of his departure, for eight years. Shuisheng thus makes a detour on his way to the front in order to return to his village and see her. There he spends half a night with his wife and child before hastily departing again. The meeting between husband and wife engenders a host of complex and contradictory feelings which are cloaked in artistic understatement-- Sun Li's special brand of minimalism. The "advice" in this story occurs at the end when Shuisheng's wife instructs her husband to hurry up and defeat the enemy so that they can be reunited once more.

The war of resistance also provides the thematic backdrop for "Recollections of the Hill Country" (\textit{Shandi huiyi}, 1949)\textsuperscript{103} and for Sun Li's novel \textit{Stormy Years}. In the former, Sun's brand of understatement comes into play when a young peasant girl of Fuping encounters a member of the Eighth Route Army washing his face in the river. Struck by the fact that he has no socks and that he is still going barefoot in the cold winter days, she takes him under her wing and makes him a pair of socks with a piece of blue Fuping homespun which she had originally set aside to make her father a gown. The girl's instructions to the soldier is to wear them to help him defeat the enemy.

Scene upon scene of pitched battle with the enemy is similarly absent from Sun Li's novel, \textit{Stormy Years}. Instead, the peasants who live on each side of the Hutuo River, central Hebei, are primarily engaged in the business of staying alive. They are drawn

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid. 8-9.

\textsuperscript{102} Anthologized in \textit{Baiyangdian jishi} 204-213.

\textsuperscript{103} Anthologized in \textit{Baiyangdian jishi} 40-47.
incidentally into various adventures as the course of the war affects them. *Stormy Years* is primarily a narrative about village conflicts and marital relations. In addition, the villagers also make shoes, destroy roads, dismantle city walls and defend their dikes according to the changing winds of war. There is one point in the novel when the people's defence corps led by the Communist Party engages in armed combat with the Japanese and the puppet troops. This is positively drawn in contrast to the Central Army of the Guomindang.

*Stormy Years* includes a rare portrait of a literary arts worker, Bianji Ge, who comes to a deeper understanding of his creativity through his close involvement with the people. The novel relates the various activities and experiences Bianji Ge undergoes in his attempt to learn how to write simply and truthfully. The nature of the artistic interpretation of reality in post-Yan'an China is a unique feature in *Stormy Years*.

Finally, Sun Li's fiction also deals with the theme of the construction of socialism. However, this is not foregrounded as in Zhao Shuli's fiction; on the contrary, it is relegated to the background where it provides the backdrop for the narration of emotive and ethical issues. In "The Blacksmith and the Carpenter," for instance, the friendship between the blacksmith, Lao Fu, and the carpenter, Lao Li, is the primary theme of this work. This bond was formed many years ago during a difficult period of poverty and labour and is very strong: Li has promised his son, Liu'er, to Old Fu's daughter, Jiu'er, as testimony of his feelings. As the narrative ensues, however, Lao Li prospers as a result of the land reform, and gradually he begins to look down on his friend. Little by little, the friendship between Li and Fu is destroyed.

Other conflicts in the novella are those marring the relations between Liu'er, Jiu'er, and Liu'er's lover, Man'er, in the story. Man'er is a young girl who has moved into the village to escape the oppression of her marriage in a village nearby. Her misery and lack of self-awareness draw her into an intimate relationship with Liu'er, which is the source of
interpersonal conflict for these three young people. A peach tree in the story is a symbol of Man'er's fate and the narrator's hope that one day she will become a more productive member of Chinese society.

Man'er contrasts with Jiu'er, a more progressive character in the story, who takes an active role in organizing the village's mutual aid teams. There is also another side to this woman-- her loneliness which stems from her early childhood when her mother died. Sun Li's influence from Zhuangzi is apparent in this novella when Jiu'er compares life's shifting, changing relations to little birds blown apart by a strong gust of wind and to a short-lived little pool of fish which symbolize life's transience and the bitter memories left behind. The narration of Jiu'er's inner contradictions made her a "round" character in the fiction of this period.

A third relationship in "The Blacksmith and the Carpenter" is that between Lao Li and his fourth son, Si'er. The conflicts in this relationship are engendered by the different political awareness and ideals of these people. Li despises his fourth son who has joined the Youth League and organizes a well-digging brigade. A study group is organized by the League, and Si'er and Jiu'er engage in endless discussions in this group about how to reform their less progressive family members, specifically, Lao Li and Liu'er. The study group is a pivotal point in the novella, and it symbolizes all the changing social and economic relations which exist side-by-side with the establishing of agricultural cooperatives. It also symbolizes the changes in the lives of the peasants, those who join the cooperatives and those, such as Lao Li, who resist change and the threat the cooperatives pose to their economic interests. The younger generation of peasants who struggles with the older generation in an attempt to persuade it to give up its measure of interest gained during the land reform is a theme inherited from the Shanyaodan novels. In The Blacksmith and the Carpenter, however, this is presented as a sub-theme only.
In conclusion, Sun Li's fiction is a representative example of *xiangtu wenxue*. This evaluation derives principally from the criteria of regional associations, peasant characterization and the rural setting which is based on the author's home. Sun Li's fiction is a compilation of many aspects of the *xiangtu wenxue* discussed so far. These include the characterization of the peasant and the hardships of rural peasant life, the theme of anti-Japanese resistance, and finally, the transformation into agricultural cooperatives under Party leadership which is resisted by the peasants. The attention this writer paid to the development of his style, however, is rarely duplicated in other works of *xiangtu wenxue*. As a result, Sun Li's works are comparatively less didactic, and this quality can also be attributed to his systematic borrowing from China's traditional legacy, particularly Chinese lyricism. In sum, Sun Li's work are a positive and interesting contribution to a period of relative Communist formulaism.

Sun Li influenced the regional expression of his contemporaries, among whom the writer Liu Shaotang formulated certain theoretical principles of *xiangtu wenxue* which were historically the first of its kind. This chapter concludes with a brief summary of Liu's formulation.

**Liu Shaotang and the Theoretical Nature of Xiangtu wenxue**

Liu Shaotang, a member of the Hehuadian School, published his first collection of short stories, *Verdant Branches and Leaves* (Qingzhi lüeyè 青枝綠葉), in 1953. Four years later in 1957 during the Anti-Rightist campaign, Liu was labelled a rightist, and from 1958 to 1962 he was exiled to his village in the Beijing suburbs to do labour reform. During the Cultural Revolution, Liu was sent down again to his village as a commune

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member where he stayed until 1979. Liu was a university graduate and considered this move a great setback; nonetheless, he was warmly received by his native villagers, and the protection and affection they offered him prompted Liu to begin writing again. In light of his experience in his village, Liu wrote that he was nurtured by the peasants and wrote about the farming villages and about the peasants of the Beijing area. Accordingly, he began to write *xiangtu wenxue* in 1977 and referred to himself as a *xiangtu zuojia*.

Liu Shaotang's stories are set in his native village in the Tong district of Hebei province. Liu's intent was to write a "revolutionary history" which would record the process of enlightenment and the struggle of his fellow villagers. Accordingly, he set about culling material from local gazettes, which Liu regarded as a prime source of inspiration for writing *xiangtu wenxue*. From his research, Liu discovered that during the years 1935 to 1937, the Tong district was governed by a miniature Manchukuo government under the protection of the Japanese and with the collusion of Jiang Jieshi. Armed with this material and coupled with his knowledge of the customs and the people of Jingdong, Liu wrote six middle-length works of *xiangtu wenxue*. These works do not differ substantially from the fiction of his earlier period; nonetheless, they do reflect Liu's deepening theoretical position regarding *xiangtu wenxue*.

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105 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
112 These are: "Humble Folk" (Puliu renjia, 1980), "Seiner Lights" (Yuhuo 1980-81), "Gourd Lane" (Guangpengliao xiang, 1981), "Flower Lane" (Hua jie, 1981), "Thickets" (Caomang, 1981) and "Moan of the Water Dragon" (Shuilong yin, 1981). (These stories are anthologized in *Puliu renjia* [Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1985].)
Liu Shaotang enumerated a number of reasons for his decision to write *xiangtu wenxue* which he expressed in a letter to one of his supporters, Lei Da.\(^{113}\) The first of these was that Liu was born in a rural country village; as a writer of *xiangtu wenxue*, he thus possessed an understanding of village history, geography, customs, peasant dialect and ethics which he transcribed into his stories about the people on either side of the Beijing-Dongbei canal.\(^{114}\) Liu's second reason was his exposure in childhood to Chinese classical literature; as result of this, he was drawn to Mao's "national forms" during the Yan'an period.\(^{115}\) Liu thus made use of the same literary tools as his Shanyaodan contemporaries. In contrast to the Shanyaodan writers who had never taken leave of their peasant background, Liu had lived for many years as an urbanite in Beijing. He was thus compelled to turn to May Fourth for intellectual sustenance. Liu's fourth reason for writing *xiangtu wenxue* derived from the May Fourth dictum that intellectuals and literature should "go to the people."\(^{116}\)

In short, Liu Shaotang was the first Chinese writer and intellectual to attempt to define the sub-genre of *xiangtu wenxue*. In the same letter to Lei Da he also formulated a theoretical paradigm for the writing of *xiangtu wenxue* which he enumerated as five points. In these points, Liu stressed that writers should:

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\(^{113}\) Ibid.

\(^{114}\) Liu Shaotang, "Guanyu xiangtu wenxue de tongxin," quoted in Yamaguchi Mamoru 234.

\(^{115}\) Ibid.

\(^{116}\) Ibid.
1. Uphold the principles of party spirit\(^{117}\) and the socialist nature in their literary creativity;
2. persist in the tradition of realism;
3. inherit and develop the national style of Chinese literature;
4. inherit and promote a strong Chinese style and rich local colour;
5. describe the customs and people of the rural villages, the history of the peasants and the destiny of a period.\(^{118}\)

As a definition of xiangtu wenxue, some of these points are problematical while others sum up different aspects of this sub-genre. The first can only be read in the context of the period of the Shanyaodan and Hehuadian Schools and the programmatic literature of the 1930s. Even then, it is highly tendentious and self-serving: writers such as Zhao Shuli were vilified just exactly for their lack of attention to the "principles of party spirit." This point thus contradicts Liu's second point that writers should "persist in the tradition of realism." The third point reflects the revival of "national forms" during the Yan'an period while the fourth is more complex. Liu's conception of a "Chinese style" (zhongguo qipai 中国文化 "spirit," or "manner" and reflects a literary debate which was raging in China in the wake of the Gang of Four. The central focus of this debate was the question of nativism versus non-nativism as stylistic and artistic elements in literature. For the first time these became a central issue in the critique of China's literary arts.

The question of a "Chinese style" in the realm of literature reflects China's relations with the outside (Western) world and has great ramifications for modernity. Western literary and philosophical influences have been seeping into China since the nineteenth century, though they had a more concentrated influence on Chinese literature when China opened its doors to the West in the wake of the Gang of Four. Liu Shaotang maintained that the co-mingling of Chinese and Western literary elements at that time eroded China's

\(^{117}\) Dangxing is equivalent to the Russian "Partinost."

\(^{118}\) Liu Shaotang, "Guanyu xiangtu wenxue de tongxin," quoted in Yamaguchi Mamoru 235.
cultural forms; he also implied that \textit{xiangtu wenxue} was a means whereby China could maintain its national integrity.\textsuperscript{119} At the same time Liu was not completely adverse to the West. He once stated that "promoting internal literary activity and keeping the doors open to the outside are mutually beneficial." 对內搞活和對外開放是相輔相成的\textsuperscript{120}

A major figure in the nativist versus non-nativist dispute was Wang Meng, a contemporary of Liu's whose career was halted for twenty years because of the Anti-Rightist campaign. Wang Meng became a topic of controversy when he began using the modernist stream-of-consciousness technique after the crushing of the Gang of Four. Wang was consequently regarded as the vanguard of the "Western school" (xiyang pai 西洋派) as opposed to Liu Shaotang and other writers who were classified as "national writers" (minzu pai 民族派).\textsuperscript{121} Wang Meng's more traditionally-minded detractors viewed Wang's fiction as the primary threat to China's national and cultural forms\textsuperscript{122} and charged that Westernization was symptomatic of the decline of China's native culture. To cap it all, in a third article, Liu Shaotang resurrected the May Fourth bias against the city as the source of evil and Western influences, in the process vilifying Wang Meng even further.\textsuperscript{123} The charge against Wang Meng can be found in the following statement by Li Congzhong, a supporter of Liu Shaotang's:

\begin{quote}
It cannot be denied that while are putting an end to the dead-end "closed-door policy," we have nurtured the erroneous tendency of infatuation with the bourgeois [sic]
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{119} Liu stated that "For the world, we must construct Chinese native literature; domestically, we must construct the \textit{xiangtu wenxue} of every area." ("Jianli Beijing de xiangtu wenxue," \textit{Beijing wenxue}, 1 [1981], quoted in Yanaguchi 235.)

\textsuperscript{120} Liu Shaotang, "Zhongguo xiangtu xiaoshuo xuan xu," Preface, XX, I: 5.

\textsuperscript{121} Yamaguchi 235. Yamaguchi does not specify in this article who classifies Liu Shaotang as a "national writer."

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid 235.

\textsuperscript{123} Liu maintained, "Wang [Meng] belongs to the city whereas I belong to the rural village." ("Chuangzuo yao you ziji de tese," \textit{Beijing wenxue}, 11 [1980], quoted in Yamaguchi, 236.)
Modernist school of literature. The way some people see it, Chinese literature can develop only if we import Western Modernist literature. Thus, symbolism, existentialism, stream-of-consciousness, etc. have become the most fashionable thing. Many people are competing to imitate them and are swarming toward them. On the opposite side of the coin, China's folk literature and China's traditional artistic methods are being ignored and are disdained as defective. They are being abandoned like worthless old shoes. \(^{124}\)

As for Liu Shaotang's fifth point stated above, the record of customs have been a standard feature of *xiangtu wenxue* since its inception in the decade of the 1920s. The history of the peasants and the destiny of a period are, sadly, also too well documented by most writers of *xiangtu wenxue*.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, prior to the debate about Wang Meng, the consequences of modernization on Chinese culture had not yet emerged as an issue in literary circles. China had not yet begun to industrialize which meant that its doors were firmly sealed to the outside world, ensuring relative isolation from Western influences. The *xiangtu wenxue* of this pre-Modernist period was thus the product of purely domestic concerns, centred around the interests of the Chinese Communist Party. In short, these were the implementation of Mao's *Yan'an Talks*, the Party's agricultural policies and the various other issues in the construction of socialism.

With the liberalizing policies of Deng Xiaoping beginning in the year 1977, all this changed. The shift to the Four Modernizations was accompanied by the opening of China's doors to the West and an ensuing influx of Western literary forms which had great consequences for the further development of *xiangtu wenxue*. In general, in the post-Mao

\(^{124}\) Quoted in Yamaguchi 235-236.
period, literature experienced relaxation; however, in 1982, as Deng's reform faction became increasingly secure, a reaction set in, and the scope of what was deemed permissible in the arts was narrowed again. This narrowing peaked in the government's implementation of its "anti-spiritual pollution campaign" against bourgeois contamination, but before this happened a new type of xiangtu wenxue had already begun to emerge. This new type, which viewed ruralism as a refuge from the inefficiency of the Chinese Communist Party, represented the third and latest typology of China's xiangtu wenxue. In the meantime, the question of Westernization was also a primary issue in the xiangtu wenxue movement which erupted in Taiwan from 1977 to 1978. Although Taiwan was substantially more modernized than China, it, too, still has not resolved the problems of Chinese modernity. This movement in Taiwan is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Five

The Xiangtu wenxue Movement of Taiwan

when from the North arrived a seed threatening, covetous, unjust, that like a spider spread her threads
extending a metallic structure that drove bloodied nails into the land raising over the dead a vault. It was the dollar with its yellow teeth, commandant of blood and grave. "Ancient History, " VI, Pablo Neruda

Taiwan's Xiangtu Wenxue Movement (xiangtu wenxue yundong 鄉土文學運動) of the year 1977 to 1978 was an extension of the socioeconomic conditions which emerged in Taiwan in the 1960s. These conditions were initially generated from the introduction of industrialism into Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period which, in turn, engendered the rapid modernization of almost every aspect of Taiwanese life. In the 1960s, the cities experienced urban angst for the first time, while the countryside underwent the erosion of Taiwan's traditional lifestyle. The practice of xiangtu wenxue with its nativist poetics in Taiwan signified that modernization did not meet with unconditional, bilateral endorsement. The rejection by Taiwan's writers of xiangtu wenxue of the outward signs of modernization was predicated on their view of the "corrupting" influences of modernization and their assumption of the moral ascendency of Taiwan's indigenous cultural forms. These forms, especially rural ones, were valorized by these writers who sought in rural Taiwan a China which predated Taiwan's Westernization. These writers

1 This chapter was published in a slightly revised version in B.C. Asian Review, 5 (1991): 1-40.
faced a dilemma, however, as their search for a transcendent China over and above the limits of modernity remained solely in the realm of the ideal. The problem of modernity in Taiwan in the 1960s was as incapable of resolution as Zhang Zhidong's "substance and function" (tiyong 體用) formula at the end of the nineteenth century in China,\(^2\) and in the mid-1970s the crisis of modernity was back in circulation. This crisis was compounded by the growth of Taiwanese nationalism which transformed the question of a transcendent China into more immediate state and social concerns.

In the 1970s, Taiwan's relations with the Western Other began to deteriorate. In the early years of that decade, a number of diplomatic incidents occurred which had great implications for the future course of Taiwan. These incidents were also the immediate catalyst for the growth of the xiangtu wenxue movement. These events were: 1) the Diaoyutai Incident of 1970;\(^3\) Taiwan's expulsion from the United nations in 1971; 3) the visit by United States President Richard Nixon to China in 1972 and the Shanghai Communiqué which resulted from that visit; and 4) the termination of diplomatic relations with Japan in 1973 and Japan's subsequent recognition of the People's Republic of China.\(^4\) The Taiwan public was outraged by these events and responded with an outpouring of aggrieved, nationalistic sentiment. Under the catalytic impact of these events, Taiwan's previously apolitical xiangtu wenxue underwent a metamorphosis and was replaced by strident polemics and an ideology which ultimately served to assuage public feeling about these incidents. The critic, Jiang Xun, noted that xiangtu wenxue was

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\(^2\) The "substance and function" formula, devised by the Self-strengthen Zhang Zhidong, was an abbreviated form of "old learning as substance and new learning as function" (jiuxue wei 体, xinxue wei yong). This formula emphasized that areas of technical and other types of innovation from the West were of practical value only; essential value still lay within Chinese culture. (Levenson 59.)

\(^3\) Diaoyutai (Senkaku in Japanese) is the largest of a group of eight small islands on the oil-rich continental shelf near Taiwan. Japan's claim to ownership prompted Chinese students in the U.S. to launch a campaign in 1970 in order to protect Chinese sovereignty. In April, 1971, the U.S. voted to give it to Japan.

\(^4\) Wang Tuo, a writer and critic who articulated most clearly the aims and significance of the xiangtu wenxue movement, was the first to point out these four events in his article, "Shi 'xianshipzhuyi' wenxue, bu shi 'xiangtu wenxue,'" in Taolunji 101.
"welcomed with exultation by our society" and that this literature constituted an "unaffected and correct realist trend." A second critic even commented that xiangtu wenxue "gratified the public thirst for nationalism." Its detractors, including the Guomindang, however, equated the new, more public xiangtu wenxue with Communism, and Joseph S.M. Lau even compared the polemics of xiangtu wenxue to Marxist or Maoist Yan'an rhetoric. Xiangtu wenxue was no longer the avatar of a Chinese ideal concept; instead, it became the agent for a perilous, local cause.

At the outset of the xiangtu wenxue movement, a controversy emerged concerning the proper definition which should be given to xiangtu wenxue. The major theorist of the movement was Wang Tuo, and his explication remains the definitive one for this period. Wang pointed out that the popularity of xiangtu wenxue arose from its stance of opposition to Modernism. This stance, however, sometimes led to three misconceptions concerning xiangtu wenxue which form the basis of Wang's definition. At the very least, they offer valuable insight into what xiangtu wenxue is not.

According to Wang Tuo, the first misconception about xiangtu wenxue arose from the confusion of this fiction with "village literature." Wang maintained that xiangtu wenxue was popularly assumed to comprise short stories which centred on the village and village folk; those whose subject matter concerned urban life, on the other hand, were thought to be excluded from this sub-genre. On the contrary, Wang Tuo maintained that Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue is just as much a literature of urban life as about life in the

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6 Jing Wang, "Taiwan Hsiang-t'u Literature" 44.


8 Wang Tuo 117.

9 Ibid.
country; it comprises narratives not only about the countryside but also about life in the cities and factories and the industrial and commercial worlds. In brief, xiangtu wenxue is literature about all levels of society: farmers and workers, national industrialists, merchants, civil servants and teachers.\textsuperscript{10}

A second misconception about xiangtu wenxue arose from the use of dialect in this literature which is also given credit for its great popularity. In stories where this usage was overemphasized, however, naive readers were led to misconceive the regional content in this fiction as an expression of political separatism, which, Wang implies, is erroneous.\textsuperscript{11} In fact, the writer and critic, Chen Yingzhen, theorized the exact opposite: Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue has the status of a "small and weak peoples" literature. Accordingly, the "anti-imperialist," "anti-feudalist" nature of xiangtu wenxue make it a "glorious, unbreakable link in the modern literature of China." In fact, the writer and critic, Chen Yingzhen, theorized the exact opposite: Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue has the status of a "small and weak peoples" literature. Accordingly, the "anti-imperialist," "anti-feudalist" nature of xiangtu wenxue make it a "glorious, unbreakable link in the modern literature of China."\textsuperscript{12} Chen theorizes that Taiwan's xiangtu wenxue was influenced by the vernacular movement of May Fourth and that it is one link in the nationalistic, political, cultural and social movements of China.\textsuperscript{13} Despite the difference in opinion of these writers, both agreed that xiangtu wenxue is characterized by a "national spirit" (minzu jingshen) and that its popularity stemmed from its opposition to the "all-out Westernization" or "compradore" nature of Taiwan's period of Modernism.\textsuperscript{14}

The third and final misconception surrounding xiangtu wenxue was the confusion of xiangtu wenxue with "literature of nostalgia" (xiangchou wenxue 鄉愁文學), that is, nostalgia for those things in the village such as the oxcart and non-mechanized farm labour

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid. 119.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} Xu Nancun, "Xiangtu wenxue de mangdian" 95.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid. 96.
\textsuperscript{14} See Chapter two p. 47 for a discussion of Modernism in Taiwan.
which disappeared under the onslaught of modernization. Some stories such as Lü Heruo's "Oxcart" and Hwang Chun-ming's "The Gong" deal with this subject matter; however, these are relatively few, and nostalgia is virtually absent in the xiangtu wenxue of the 1970s. In an attempt to give a positive definition to this literature, Wang concludes that the real meaning of xiangtu wenxue lies in its reflection of human sentiment and real life in the human world which includes tragedy, struggle, conflict and hope. Accordingly, xiangtu wenxue is one type of "national literature."

As the tide of nationalistic sentiment swelled in Taiwan, it not only spurred on the literary movement but it also found expression in historical and cultural studies undertaken by Taiwanese historians. These were designed with the specific aim of constructing historical continuity with Taiwan's past under the Japanese and even Chinese and Dutch rule and, ultimately, with promoting Taiwanese national interests. These studies fashioned a history that was primarily colonialist and, at the same time, one that depicted Taiwan as a puppet at the unceasing mercy of imperialist powers. Historians also argued that these historical forces constitute the main determinant in the construction of a "Taiwanese consciousness" (Taiwan yishi 塔南意識), which is a problematical concept. On the one hand, this concept was used by the separatists to justify their political aims; on the other hand, this idea lacked a verifiable basis in historical reality, and it was thus easily made use of by the reunificationists. Chen Yingzhen, for instance, argued that the basis for the "Taiwanese consciousness" was none other than a "Chinese consciousness" (Zhongguo yishi 中國意識) which reflects Chen's own interests in political reunification. Many of
these historical and cultural studies took the form of articles which were published in the popular journal *Xia chao* (China Tide) and were later anthologized in separate volumes.

The journal *Xia chao* also reprinted Taiwan fiction by the Taiwanese writers Lai He, Lü Heruo and Yang Kuei from the Japanese colonial period. The works by these writers had been banned prior to the mid-1970s under the Guomindang's strict literary policy against leftist fiction; their reprinting in the mid-1970s thus provided an important model for writers of *xiangtu wenxue* in this period. Some Taiwanese critics interpreted these works from the Japanese period as resistance stories against Japanese colonialist repression, though this criticism also often derived from the bias of vested interests. Nonetheless, Chen Yingzhen's claim that these stories formed part of the legacy of the Chinese May Fourth canon is also stylistically undeniable. In sum, the emergence of cultural and historical studies in Taiwan in the decade of the 1970s and the reprinting of Taiwanese *xiangtu wenxue* from the earlier period of Japanese rule were closely linked with nationalistic interests. At the same time, these studies did ultimately heighten awareness of Taiwan's colourful cultural past.

Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* of the late 1970s became increasingly coloured by a strongly socialist ideology. This literature took on the function of an exposé of the socioeconomic injustices suffered by the underprivileged of Taiwan society. At the same time, it cast the blame for these injustices upon the Western and Japanese imperialist powers whose interests were sanctioned by the Nationalist (GMD) government. As though carrying on the legacy of the earlier Japanese period, Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* became stridently anti-imperialist. Socialist critics labelled this period under American and Japanese investment capital a "second colonial period" and referred to the sentiments expressed in *xiangtu wenxue* as "anti-imperialist" and "anti-colonialist." It was pointed out by various critics at the time that these ideological messages tended to overpower aesthetic considerations in this literature, and this phase of *xiangtu wenxue* has sometimes
been disparaged by literary historians for this reason. Joseph S.M. Lau has summarized the ideological messages of Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* during this period as follows:

- 1) The resistance to Japanese and American "imperialism" on all levels, particularly cultural and economic;
- 2) The call for social welfare reforms and the equitable distribution of wealth;
- 3) The extolling of the essential virtues of the "little men" from the small town or countryside;
- 4) The affirmation of the necessity for national self-respect against the effrontery and vulgarity of the "Ugly American" and "Lecherous Japanese."  

As a literary movement rich in political metaphor, *xiangtu wenxue* was not without its conservative detractors. These detractors raised issues related and unrelated to the movement in order to inveigh against it. In general, they rained disparagement on *xiangtu wenxue*’s political connotations, adding fuel to the fire of the controversy which was raging out of hand. In August, 1977, Peng Ge addressed the economic issues such as those summarized in the first two points above. Peng countered Wang Tuo’s view that literature should be a "champion of the underprivileged" and asserted that literature should be based on morals and reflect basic human values. Peng maintained that *xiangtu wenxue* had lost its former spirit of purity and truth which had characterized this fiction in the decade of the 1960s and that it had become degenerate and full of anger. Peng concluded his discussion with the affirmation of the value of the intellectual as a vital guarantee for freedom in society. He followed this with a caveat that literature not fall prey and be used as a tool for political purposes.

Yu Guangzhong, on the other hand, contributed to the *xiangtu wenxue* controversy with his discussion on the concept of literature of "workers, peasants and

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19 Lau, "Echoes of the May Fourth Movement" 147.

20 Peng Ge, "Bu tan renxing, he you wenxue?" in *Taolunji* 248.
soldiers," a variant form of which had recently appeared in the Taiwan arts scene. In "Wolf!" (Lang laile, August 1977), Yu reminded his readers that this art form had its roots in the political context of Mao Zedong's *Yan'an Talks* and warned against conflating Taiwan's local creations with Mao's war of class struggle against "feudalism" and capitalism. Yu maintained that the high caliber of art produced by members of the Taiwan military was not due to class background but to artistic achievement alone.21 Yu's discussion, however, barely concealed his charge that the pro-xiangtu wenxue faction, including Chen Yingzhen, Wang Tuo, et al., possessed a "Cry Wolf" mentality. Before "capping" national writers with the various labels of "slave mentality," "parasitic," "compradore," "foreign-loving," "colonial," etc., Yu warned that they should examine the content of their own "caps,"22 or, in other words, their Communist sympathies.

The rampant and very real fear of Communism and Communist subversion in Taiwan was, and still is, especially felt in government circles. In 1977, the xiangtu wenxue controversy predictably evoked a negative response on the part of the Nationalist government. Hostile to anything that smacked of Communism, the government was leery both of xiangtu wenxue's socialist content and of its criticism of the Guomindang's "compradore" economic policy. If allowed to go unchecked, the movement could conceivably undermine government policy and the Guomindang's monopoly on power. Accordingly, on August 29, 1977, the Nationalist government convened a three-day seminar entitled the Symposium of Literary Workers (*Wenyi gongzuozhe zuotanhui* 文藝工作者坐談會) which was ostensibly called for the purpose of declaring that Taiwan enjoyed artistic freedom under the Nationalists, in contrast to conditions on the Mainland under Communism.23 What emerged, however, was a debate over the affiliation of art

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22 Ibid. 267.
23 Jing Wang 45.
and politics and the real fear on the part of the government that xiangtu wenxue had the potential to call into being a "proletarian" literature.24 In the manifesto published by the symposium, the government called down the charge of Communist subversion onto this literature:

The enterprise of contemporary art and literature must pay close attention to the intelligence sources of our enemies. We have to propagate actively the arts and literature of freedom and humanity, a product of the cooperation of the whole nation, and attack in full force the literature of slavery, materialism and class struggle. We want to protect the purity in the realm of our art, thoroughly smashing to pieces the heresy of Communist literature and arts, uncovering the fallacious theories and distorted works bewitched by Communism.25

At the same time that the xiangtu wenxue movement was getting underway, a grassroots opposition political movement was also gaining momentum. This was the Dangwai 黨外 (literally "outside the [Guomindang] party") movement which was mostly separatist in political orientation, though a minor reunification faction did exist within the larger movement. As a united front, the Dangwai lobbied for greater democratic and political freedoms under the Nationalist government and was the forerunner of the various reforms achieved in Taiwan during the decade of the 1980s.26 As one arm of the political movement, the xiangtu wenxue movement also served as a forum for the dissemination of the ideas of the political movement. In 1978, two major writers of xiangtu wenxue, Wang Tuo and Yang Qingchu (1940- ), became discouraged by the slow rate of reform and social change which they originally conceived of accomplishing through their writing. Deserting the literary scene, they crossed over to the Dangwai political arena and became

24 Ibid.
25 Zhongyang ribao (September 1, 1977), cited in Jing Wang 45-46.
26 For example, the abolition of Martial Law in 1988, which was followed soon after by the government’s recognition of the current opposition party, the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party).
actively engaged in politics and sought candidacy in the 1978 parliamentary elections. This event signified even further the political nature of *xiangtu wenxue* and its close affiliation with reformist, opposition politics.

Shortly after this, a number of events transpired which ultimately signalled the death of both these movements in Taiwan. The first came in December of 1978 when the United States announced its intention to shift diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the People's Republic of China. With this announcement, the parliamentary elections were cancelled. Shortly after, the journal *Xia chao* was banned for one year, fictional works were also proscribed and an opposition politician was arrested and sentenced as an accomplice to a communist spy. Finally, the Kaohsiung Incident of December 1979 provided the government with the opportunity to quash both the literary and grassroots political movements. *Dangwai* leaders were arrested, and along with these, the two writers mentioned above—Wang Tuo and Yang Qingchu—were also arrested. These events foreclosed the immediate activities of both the *xiangtu wenxue* and *Dangwai* movements, though the latter has since reemerged in the form of the legal opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party. Post-*xiangtu wenxue* literature in Taiwan has assumed other modes and genres more characteristic of post-modernist literature.

**Wang Zhenhe**

"Little Lin Comes to Taipei" (*Xiao Lin lai Taipei, 小林來臺北* 1973) by Wang Zhenhe is one of the first stories to anticipate the shift of *xiangtu wenxue* to its ideological stage. The narrative framework for this story is supplied by the rural-urban dichotomy, which is a legacy of Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* from the 1960s. These dynamics are evoked by the figure of Xiao Lin, who works as a company "gopher" (*gongyou* 工友) in

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27 Anthologized in *Jiazhuang yi niuche* 219-249.
the Taipei airlines corporation in the story. Xiao Lin represents that segment of the rural population which has migrated to the urban centre to seek employment in Taipei's newly-emerged business and corporate sector. Lin comes from a background of rural penury, and the usurious squeezing of the countryside by the city, contrasted strongly with the squandering excesses of the urban centre, constitute a primary theme of this story.

Xiao Lin's rural perspective in "Little Lin Comes to Taipei" contrasts with another kind of mythopoesis in this story: the "worship of things foreign" (chongyang meiwai 憑洋媚外) which is the mentality of the company employees and is all too often synonymous with the nouveau riche outlook of Taiwan's middle class. Sadly unaware of the meta-dynamics operating outside the little world of their company, specifically, Taiwan's political betrayal by international interests, these ignorant, middle-class "imitation foreign devils" (jia yanguizi 假洋鬼子) persist in their belief in the superiority of a Western, particularly American, way of life. This ignorance is manifested through their pursuit of the supposed utopian qualities of a Californian lifestyle, the advantages of procuring a foreign wife and the benefits of schooling their children in the American way. Xiao Lin discovers that possessing knowledge of English can also bring certain other advantages as well, for instance, a better position and higher salary in the company, and his sympathetic concern for a long-term employee whose career has suffered from his deficiency in this area constitutes the type of humanist value in "Little Lin Comes to Taipei" which is characteristic of May Fourth. This value establishes a vital link between xiangtu wenxue and the earlier May Fourth legacy.

Stylistically, "Little Lin Comes to Taipei" is classified as low burlesque.28 This classification is based, in particular, on the author's satire of the penchant of the "imitation foreign devils" for adopting English names.29 Wang makes use of a punning technique, 

28 Robert Yi Yang, "Form and Tone in Wang Zhen-ho's Fiction" 140.

29 The adoption of English names is found in other and earlier examples of Chinese fiction, for example, Qian Zhongshu's Wei cheng. In this novel, however, the characters are not accorded the same mocking treatment as in Wang's short story.
for example, the name "Doris" to the ears of the unworldly narrator sounds like "to dump garbage" and is transcribed as "dao lese" 倒垃圾; "Nancy" in the story is "lan shi" 腐烂 or "rotten cadaver"; and "Douglas" is the even more farcical "daogouai lashi " 倒過來拉屎, meaning "to shit backwards."30 This particular technique is not common in other works of xiangtu wenxue; it is, however, a channel allowing the author to give vent to his "lava of spite and ire,"31 which, one could say, is typical of the 1970s xiangtu wenxue polemics.

Hwang Chun-ming32

Hwang Chun-ming is a second writer whose fiction also took a sharp ideological turn in the 1970s. The critic Howard Goldblatt has delineated three phases in Hwang's career, the third one of which overlaps with this turning-point to a more ideological focus in his works. In Goldblatt's words, Hwang's third phase is "urban-centred, more nationalistic and generally didactic."33 The first story of Hwang's under discussion is "Taste of Apples" (Pingguo de ziwei, 蘋果的滋味 n.d.)34 which is one of Hwang's first stories of this phase. This story is less polemical than "Sayonara. Good-bye" (Sayonara. zaijian, 沙貞娜歌, 再見 1973) or the notorious novella Little Widow (Xiao Guafu, 小寡婦

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30 Wang Zhenhe 221, 224.
31 Yang 141
32 During the xiangtu wenxue movement, Huang Chun-ming, Chen Yingzhen and Wang Tuo systematically denied that they were xiangtu zuojia. Hwang and Wang preferred to be called writers of realism.
33 Howard Goldblatt, "The Rural Stories of Hwang Chun-ming" 111.
1975),\textsuperscript{35} both of which are discussed below; nonetheless, its tone suggests an incipient anti-Americanism which is systematically fleshed out in Hwang's later fiction.

"Taste of Apples" opens with an automobile accident: the bicycle ridden by the labourer Jiang A-fa is hit by an American limousine as it enters a major intersection in the city. At this point there is a disjuncture in the signifying configuration of the text: a hurried phonecall is made to the U.S. embassy which introduces an open-ended discourse on U.S.-Taiwan relations. While it is clear from this call that embassy personnel wish to avoid an incident, at the same time, it is also apparent that there is little likelihood of an incident being made of this accident because of Taiwan's compliant diplomatic attitude. From this phonecall, it is obvious that Taiwan needs the U.S just as much as the U.S needs Taiwan:

"... He won't be in this morning.... Uh uh .... It's of no consequence. The Second Secretary can make a decision on this.... Hmmm.... No, no, listen, you must understand -- this is Asia! The other party was a labourer. Eh? --He was, wasn't he?... Yes, a labourer! As I've said, it's not worth losing our cool over. Eh?... Let me finish! You think the U.S wants to dirty its hands in something like this?! Everyone back home goes along with this.... Ahhh, there's nothing more to be said then. Just send him off!... Huh? Okay then, let me handle it.... Right, I'll make a call right now.... Right, right! It's settled then. So long!"\textsuperscript{36}

Next, Jiang A-fa's wife, A-gui, and the couple's children are spirited away by limousine to the luxurious hospital where Jiang A-fa is hospitalized. These unsophisticated characters from Taipei's slums respond with spontaneity and ingenuity to the sparkling, new hospital surroundings. There is an obvious discrepancy implied in this story between the facilities available for use by Taiwan's underprivileged and those for the elite. This recalls the summons for the equitable distribution of wealth -- the second item in Joseph

\textsuperscript{35} "Sayonara . Good-bye" is anthologized in \textit{Sayonara . zaijian} 127-190; \textit{Little Widow} is anthologized in \textit{Little Widow} 93-213.

\textsuperscript{36} Hwang 28.
Lau's schematization. In the hospital, the Jiang family is led to believe that Jiang A-fa's accident is a blessing in disguise: not only are the medical expenses taken on by the American, Colonial Gurley, but the family is awarded or, properly speaking, bribed, with a healthy sum of twenty thousand dollars. In fact, Jiang A-fa is reminded over and over that he should thank his lucky stars that he was hit by an American and not by someone else. At this point, the narrator relates ironically that A-fa intoned his thanks, "tearful with gratitude."  

The ironic tone established in "Taste of Apples" is maintained throughout the story to its conclusion. The narrative relates that there are other benefits which accrue to the Jiang family, for instance, apples, which were a luxury item in Taiwan at the time of the story. The children eye these apples which are set out on the table next to their father's bed. Reminded of their worth-- one apple is worth four catty of rice-- each child bites into one as they had seen apples being eaten on TV. These apples are symbolic not only of Taiwan-U.S relations but also of Taiwan's smashed hopes and dreams in aspiring after American patronage. As the omniscient narrator relates, the apples are "not as sweet and juicy as they had imagined them to be. They were dry and mealy. One chewed and a little juice came but it didn't seem real somehow." 總覺得沒有想像那麼甜美,酸酸澀澀,嚼起來泡泡的有點假假的感覺

When the children remind themselves of the value of the apples, however, the taste seems to improve, and the story ends with a repeated "Choomp!" ringing through the room.

The issue of Taiwan's international relations is also the central theme of Hwang Chun-ming's "Sayonara. Good-bye." This story created an enormous sensation when it appeared in 1974, not just because of this issue but also because of its subject matter dealing with sex and prostitution which are generally considered to be taboo by the

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37 Ibid. 53.
38 Ibid. 57.
conservative Chinese public. Hwang Chun-ming is known, rightly or wrongly, for his feminist sympathies, which were manifested as early as 1967 in his short story "Sea-Watching Days" (Kan hai de rizi, 看海的日子 1967) about a veteran Taiwanese prostitute named Baimei. In "Sayonara . Good-bye," however, the issue of women's rights is presented somewhat differently. They are related, instead, to Taiwan's dependent, semi-colonial status under Japanese and American capitalist business interests. Deficient in raw materials, Taiwan is ever in need of foreign exchange with which to procure these essentials to meet the needs of its ever-growing industrial sector. Currently, and in the decades under discussion, this need is met primarily through the sale of finished, industrial products. A second source of this exchange, however, and one in which the government collaborated at the time of the story derived from the hostessing function of Chinese women who were manipulated, or "nationalized" in the terminology of the time, to meet the sexual demands of the visiting foreign businessmen. The bars, nightclubs, dance halls and spas which proliferated in response to this demand is testimony to the importance of this sector of Taiwan's population in meeting the needs of Taiwan's national business interests. The criticism of the sexual exploitation of Chinese women in this context in "Sayonara . Good-bye" was just one aspect of the critique of the overall pattern of Taiwan's international business relations. In this story, this exploitation takes the form of a Japanese sex tour which is a spin-off of this theme.

In "Sayonara . Good-bye," the protagonist, Mr. Hwang, is compelled by the advertising company he works for to act as pimp for the Japanese "Thousand Beheadings Club" (Sennin giri kurubu), a group of seven business clients from Japan. This club derives its raison d'être from the original samurai ideal of killing one thousand men; however, as the Samurai Code no longer exists today, the objective of the club members, or "Seven Samurai," has been transmuted into the ideal of sleeping with one thousand

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39 Anthologized in Sayonara . saijian 59-126.
different women. Each man is equipped with a special "magic oil of India" and a memo
book in which he records the "name of the girl, a description of her figure, how the
lovemaking went,"40 and so on, together with a space where he can affix one of the girl's
pubic hairs with tape. With the reluctant "Hwang kun" in tow, the Japanese set off to visit
and bask in the local amenities offered by the hot spring resort at Zhaoxi.41

Hwang kun avenges himself on the Japanese in the final section of the story which is
entitled "Japan's Longest Day." Joseph Lau points out that the protagonist in "Sayonara. 
Good-bye" is a Chinese familiar with the role of the Japanese in modern Chinese history.42
His grandfather's leg had been smashed by the Japanese during the Pacific War, and in
high school he had seen pictures of the Rape of Nanking and other Japanese atrocities.
Throughout his assignment, Hwang is compelled to swallow back his hatred and to serve
the Japanese in such a way that brings humiliation on himself and on his female Taiwanese
compatriots. But his opportunity for revenge comes on the train on the way back to Taipei
from Zhaoxi. During a chance encounter with a young student who introduces himself to
the Japanese in order to further his academic interests, Hwang kun succeeds in his intent
to "turn their pleasure into anguish."43 Not only does he get the Japanese clients to admit
to the war atrocities, he also has them acknowledge Japan's current economic aggression
against Taiwan. At the same time that he does this, Hwang also succeeds in giving the
Chinese student a lesson in patriotism. The aims of Chinese nationalism are thus met in
"Sayonara. Good-bye"'s comic ending.44 The only individuals for whom accounts have
yet to be settled are the Chinese women who suffered the greatest degree of humiliation.

40 Hwang Chun-ming, "Sayonara. Tsai-chien," in Drowning of an Old Cat and Other Stories 259.
41 Kun is an informal Japanese term of address for a younger man.
Zhaoxi is a resort offering sulphur baths and prostitution located on Taiwan's northeast coast.
42 Joseph Lau, "Echoes of the May Fourth Movement" 140.
43 Hwang 267.
44 Northrop Frye defines comedy as the resolution of the action and the emergence of a new society. (Frye 163.)
This, however, is not even mentioned as an issue in the text, and the fact that it is not is indicative of the sublimation of female gender difference under the privileging of Chinese national interests. The concept of gender difference arises as a separate issue only in fiction by women such as Li Ang.45

The nationalization of women is also the theme of Hwang Chun-ming's *Little Widow*. This novella replicated the confrontational stance vis-à-vis the foreign presence in Taiwan which was displayed in Hwang's "Sayonara. Good-bye," though in the case of the *Little Widow*, the presence is American. This anti-foreign motif in Hwang's stories led Joseph Lau to comment that Huang Chunming's stories represent a "conscious reaction against the demoralization of Taiwan life through American and Japanese cultural infiltration."46

The plotline of *Little Widow* can be summarized as follows: In 1968, the island of Taiwan was drawn into the Far East zone as a Rest and Recreation (R & R) centre for the American troops stationed in the Viet Nam theatre of war. This event led to the further mushrooming of bars and nightclubs throughout many cities in Taiwan as well as the intensification of hostessing activities. The "Little Widow" is one such bar which was created as the result of a new concept in the nightclub industry, one which aimed at being as competitive as possible in the struggle to attract American military patronage. *Little Widow* is a vivid and humanistic portrayal both of Taiwan's prostitutes and the anguish of the American GIs stationed in Viet Nam. It is a piece of hard-core political reality: the reality of war, drugs and prostitution as well as the rock-bottom despair born of the hopeless situation of the US involvement in Indochina. The novella opens with the year 1968:

45 For instance, Li Ang's novel *Sha fu* (The Butcher's Wife, 1983)
46 Joseph Lau, "Echoes of the May Fourth Movement" 139.
In 1968, US President Johnson prescribed record-high numbers of American military personnel for service in the Viet Nam theatre of war. When involvement numbered more than five hundred thousand, Taiwan was drawn into the Far East zone as a Rest and Recreation centre for the American troops. Taiwan's previously sluggish bar and nightclub industry immediately began to flourish as though seeing the sun for the first time. Bars mushroomed in Taipei, Keelung, Kaohsiung and other places. Even remote Hualien which had never before even possessed a bar, boasted about its new industry. Public teahouses undertook minor renovation to their exterior: neon signs with English wording were installed which blinked on and off like an eye, and lo and behold! -- A bar was created! With a flick of the hand, tea attendants were transformed into bar girls. The question raised was whether this change in status was a promotion? If not, what was it? The tea attendants-cum-bar girls were themselves at sea about this. Nonetheless, deep inside, each one of them felt a delicious, unspeakable thrill of excitement.

The newly-created bargirls are provided with previously unneeded types of cosmetics and a portable cosmetic case like those used by movie stars. The girls are also given an impromptu education consisting of pep talks which are designed to prepare them for their new duties. The boss of the bar, Huang Laoban, baptises each of them with an English name, teaches them how to pronounce it, and even encourages them to dye their hair red and get a "nose job." These strategies are designed to augment the girls' allure and to mold them for their new hostessing activities with Americans.

The major alteration to the enterprise, however, is the introduction of a "concept" aimed at beautifying the so-called "special business operation" 特種營業 and causing it to transcend the usual lewd connotations of "bar." The brainchild of the concept is Ma Shanxing, a returned American scholar whose explication of his strategy in the section of

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47 Hwang 93-94.

48 This operation involved inserting a piece of ivory into the nose to build up the bridge. A second one aimed at the creation of "double eyelids" shuangyan pi. Both operations were designed to endow a client with American-style facial features, considered the standard for beauty at the time.

49 This word is in English in the original text.
the novella entitled "Summit Talks" is punctuated by his abundant use of English terms, such as "concept," "charming," "oral communication," "publicity," "catch phrase," "body copy" and so on. These words, like the adopted English names of the "imitation foreign devils" in "Little Lin comes to Taipei," are symptomatic of Ma's foreign-loving mentality and serve to successfully impress his audience with his U.S.-acquired knowledge. Ma Shanxing's concept clearly embodies all the semiological ramifications of Barthes' "consciousness of the sign" with its symbolic, paradigmatic, and syntagmatic levels of meaning. Its motif of institutionalized widowhood evokes not only a plethora of nuances rich in meanings and taboos but also embody a hidden eroticism designed to titillate and arouse the curiosity of the American GIs. Not only is the bar's previous name of "Lucian" replaced with "Little Widow" but the bargirls themselves masquerade as Qing-style Chinese widows abiding by the traditional precepts regarding chastity. As a final coup, "Little Widow" is suggestively advertised in the local papers. All these "new war strategies" stem from the hope that this will pave the way for these entrepreneurs to "fight their way to the front ranks" of the bar and nightclub industry.

The bulk of the long narrative of Little Widow is taken up with the hard life of the prostitutes, their romantic involvements and the children conceived from these involvements. It also describes the hardships of the American military clientele, the soldiers' war experiences in Viet Nam and the solace they find in the company of the women in the Little Widow. A subtheme of the story is the entrepreneurial successes of the soulless, opportunistic Ma Shanxing who is as indifferent to the suffering around him as the Fat Boy in Pickwick. Ma’s impassiveness contrasts with the humanism of the bargirl, Feifei, and the GI, Billy, two characters caught up in the storms and turbulence of the times. After being honourably discharged from the army, Billy returns to the bar to


51 Hwang 105.
find Feifei and to show his gratitude to her: Billy believes that Feifei was responsible for his survival in an incident with a mine during the war. The two are reunited and climb into a taxi which speeds down Zhongshan North Road, bringing to a conclusion a complex and moving saga of bar life during a unique period in Taiwan's modern history. This conclusion of *Little Widow* is characterized by the pathos and open-endedness which feature the endings of most of Hwang Chun-ming's fiction.

Zeng Xinyi (1948–)

The theme of the nationalization of women continues in the stories of Zeng Xinyi. Zeng attained great distinction during the *xiangtu wenxue* movement for her stories with bar and dance hall settings, one at least of which was dramatized in the late 1970s. Zeng was the daughter of a bargirl, and she was herself a taxi dancer; thus she possessed first-hand knowledge of this world of Taiwan's society which she brilliantly transcribes into her fiction. Her literary achievements and the sociopolitical messages of her fiction squared precisely with the ideological concerns of the *xiangtu wenxue* movement. They made of this writer one of the chief contributors to this movement.

Zeng's stories with bar settings include "Xu Wei in the Bar" (*Jiubajian de Xu Wei*, n.d.). This story centres on the little bar world in the northern port town of Keelung. This port town was not only a source for American-made goods which contributed to a brisk trade on the black market, but it was also a port of entry for American GIs serving in Viet Nam who were then transferred to Taiwan for Rest and Recreation. These GIs were a major clientele of the bar; nonetheless, Xu Wei in the story cannot bear to watch the corruption of Chinese women at the hand of these foreigners and hopelessly

52 The following discussion can also be found in my article, "Representation of Women in Chinese Fiction: the Female body Subdued, Re(s)trained, (Dis)posessed.

desires to exact his revenge. The sublimation of female gender difference in this story by Zeng once again points to the priority of national interests during this period of Taiwan history. The world of the dance hall, bargirls, drugs and jail are themes repeated in other stories by Zeng, such as "Women of the Tower" (Gelouli de nüren, n.d.).

Though Zeng Xingyi is the author of at least three collections, her reputation as a writer derived principally from her well-known "I Love the Professor" (Wo ai Boshi, 我愛博士, 1976) which, among all her works, attained the highest accolades during the xiangtu wenxue movement. It was rumoured that the source for this story derived from the author's own life experience; however, it is also equally probable that this conception arose from the erroneous conflation of the author with the fictional narrator. This is a usual practice in Chinese criticism.

In "I Love the Professor," the various exploitative ramifications of Taiwan's international business relations, including the sexual manipulation of women, is reinforced at home through the Taiwan "nativist elite." The conflicting dynamics which mark the relations between the nativist elite and the nationalized female population is apparently a burden not uncommon in other semi-colonized Asian societies, for instance, post-colonial India, in which one scholar refers to the nationalized female population as the "gendered subaltern." In "I Love the Professor," the representative of the nativist elite is a Westernized scholar named Zhang who returns to Taiwan after obtaining a doctorate from Harvard. The "subaltern," who speaks through the "I"-narrator, is an office worker who, since childhood, has idolized learning and believed that, equipped with learning, she would

54 Anthologized in Wo ai boshi 79-94.
56 Gayatri Spivak's keynote address entitled "Postcolonialism, Resistance and the Gendered Subaltern" which she delivered at the August 10, 1988 International Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies at UBC, Vancouver, BC, presented an almost exact parallel of this phenomenon in a piece of fiction from post-colonial India.
be "adept at understanding and dealing with worldly affairs." Attracted to Zhang as "honest and upright" and a "charming intellectual, hard-working and enthusiastic," the narrator engages in a love affair.

"I Love the Professor" is largely devoted to descriptions of the tender interactions between the lovers, doubts as to Zhang's sincerity on the part of the narrator and the colonized woman's idolization of academe. Her colonization, accordingly, is of two kinds: the first which results from the unequal balance of power between herself and the returned scholar and the second which exists between herself and the power-ridden institutes of academe. In the first instance, the "I" in the story recognizes that Zhang is an elite: 

"[Zhang] oozed with the easy fortunes of the affluent. He had the self-confidence and Westernized air of the returned scholar.... He had the ample confidence and authority of the elitist intellectual." His elitism contrasts strongly with her status as an office worker. In the second place, the "I" perceives the doctoral degree as a symbol of her own quest for knowledge: "I had always pursued the truth-- this was the ultimate belief and greatest meaning of my life." This knowledge, however, is largely inaccessible to this woman, denied her by her limited economic and social resources. Nonetheless, when Zhang abandons her for a Cantonese girl, the subaltern, overcome by a "grisly" sense of shame, throws herself into her studies. She prepares to take the joint entrance exam for university, and when she finds that she has been admitted to a department she likes, she is "delirious with joy."

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57 Zeng 180.
58 Ibid. 158.
59 Ibid. 160-161.
60 Ibid. 174.
61 Ibid. 180.
Overshadowed by this happiness, the pain she has suffered gradually subsides. The narrative concludes with the subaltern's growing awareness of her dependence, an awareness ultimately conferred upon her by her brief encounter with power.

Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* during the 1970s evolved into more than a variant nativist inquiry into ruralism, such as China's rural regionalism or Taiwan's earlier ruralist indictment of modernization. Instead, this fiction acquired a political coloration, which was nationalist or socialist, or, what is more accurate, a combination of elements of traditional xenophobia with a call for reform. The politicization of this fiction led to its acclamation by its supporters as "literature of resistance," "literature of exposure" and even the problematical "literature of workers, peasants, soldiers." On the other hand, this same political coloration also led to its vilification by its detractors as "proletarian literature" as well as its equation with Communism. The division of the Taiwan reading public into two political camps by this movement, which mirrored the two internal factions of reunification and separatism, was also a unique feature of this period of *xiangtu wenxue*. In sum, the complexity of discourse of Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* during the 1970s goes beyond the usual connotations of "nativism."

Over and above these concerns is the fact that this literature was produced by individuals who evinced an unusually high degree of political awareness, and these individuals transcribed this awareness into their fiction. Whether these individuals can be labelled "intellectuals" in the traditional Chinese sense or whether they are writers in the post-May Fourth evolution of the term, they all hail from a broad cross-section of Taiwan society: they are office workers, factory workers, business people, taxi dancers and fisherfolk. Accordingly, they write about those sectors of Taiwan's population with which they are most familiar, that is, bargirls, workers, slum dwellers, fisherfolk and office workers. The subsequent range of characterization in this fiction brings to mind Wang
Tuo's comment that xiangtu wenxue comprises narratives about all aspects of Taiwanese life.

**Wang Tuo**

As mentioned above, Wang Tuo was not only a writer; he was also a theorist and an activist who did his utmost to put his political ideals into action. Wang's sense of social and political justice and his advocacy of social welfare reforms stemmed in part from his impoverished family background. The son of a poor Taiwanese fisherman, Wang was compelled to learn the trade himself at a young and impressionable age. This background gave him a deep awareness of the disparity of privileges between the haves and have-nots in society which angered him so much as a child that he would "pick up a stone and hit the window of some 'unfriendly family' with all his might."62 Wang recalls in this interview that, "If I heard a loud cracking sound, I immediately took to my feet. If I missed it, I would pick up the second and third stone. Not until that hated window was smashed would I run away."63 This type of experience set the tone for Wang's fiction and for his political activity in which he became engaged in later in life.

In this interview, Wang gives evidence of an "expanded socio-political consciousness."64 This is the type of consciousness which the Nationalists feared would lead to the emergence of a "proletarian" literature in Taiwan. At the same time, the moral role of the writer and the self-imposed mission which Wang Tuo aspired to echo with Lu Xun-like sentiments and with Lu Xun's reformist view of literature.65 During the

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62 Quoted in Lau 145.
63 Ibid.
64 Jing Wang 45.
65 Leo Lee writes in *Voices from the Iron House* that more than any other writer, Lu Xun exemplified "the self-imposed moral burden of being a critical conscience on behalf of society vis-a-vis the [Chinese] political establishment." (Leo Lee, *Voices from the Iron House* 133.)
Dangwai movement, Wang Tuo became convinced that literature was unable to perform the role of social reform that he so earnestly assigned to it, and he temporarily gave up his literary aspirations for participation in the arena of politics. After his arrest and while he was serving his prison sentence for his part in the Kaohsiung Incident, Wang Tuo subsequently disavowed these activities and once again took to writing fiction.

Many of Wang Tuo's works centre on Taiwan's fishing village, modelled after his home town of Badouzi, Keelung, and on the difficult lives of Taiwan's fisherfolk. Wang Tuo conceptualized the problems of the fishing village as one link in the whole spectrum of social problems. When other problems do not meet with resolution, Wang theorized, this problem is also not resolved. "The Explosion" (Zha, 1973) is one such example of this theory. This is a story about rural poverty, economic powerlessness and greed which combine to make "The Explosion" a tragedy.

"The Explosion" opens with all the dramatic elements of Lao She's "The Teahouse," though in this case the setting is not a teahouse but the gambling parlour of the Xingwang grocery store in a little fishing village called Aodi. The young fisherman, Chen Shuisheng, has just gambled away the proceeds from the sale of his wife's carefully-cultivated crop of sweet potatoes. Shuisheng was originally hoping to win the balance of his son's school fee which was due the next day; instead he has lost every penny of his wife's one hundred and eighty yuan. Overcome by remorse, Shuisheng's greatest fear is that his son will now not be able to attend school and must spend his life in this poverty-stricken fishing village, forced like his father to live his life in insolvency. Chen Shuisheng turns for solace to the harbour and his sampan where he broods over his future and that of his son.

Eventually, the fisherman finds his way back to the Xingwang gambling parlour and ponders whether he should borrow the needed funds from Xingwang Sao, the wife of the

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storekeeper. If he borrows it, it will take him more than five years to return the interest alone; if he doesn’t, his son will be denied an education. Shuisheng approaches Xingwang Sao who reminds him that he already owes her three thousand five hundred and sixty-two yuan. She agrees to lend him the required amount but on the condition that Chen Shuisheng brings his son forward as collateral for the loan. The proprietress had feverishly wished for a son ever since her own had died a number of years previously, but Chen Shuisheng is appalled by the suggestion. He storms out, and "The Explosion" swiftly descends to its tragic denouement: Chen Shuisheng decides to engage in the illegal and dangerous method of catching fish with explosives (zha yu).68

In the final scene, Chen Shuisheng’s emaciated form lies bleeding and unconscious in the hospital, wounded by explosives. Nonetheless, the police continue to interrogate him about the source of the explosives and who else is hiding them in the village. Xingwang Sao, fearing that Chen Shuisheng will die without repaying her loan, also puts in an appearance at his bedside. Realizing the hopelessness of the situation, she turns her footsteps in the direction of his broken-down cottage. All she finds of value there, however, is his Chen Shuisheng’s sleeping child whom she wraps up with a blanket and plans to abduct. At this point, the avaricious impulses of this archetypical Chinese usurer are overcome by humanistic sentiment, and Xingwang Sao begins to weeps, questioning the morality of her action. "The "Explosion" concludes with the repeated cries of the police alert, warning of a raid. In sum, this story is more than a work of simple village realism: the cruel practice of traditional usury supplies the element of "anti-feudalism" which makes "The Explosion" a part of modern Chinese literature. In Wang Tuo’s own words, this piece of fiction reflects the world of real life of "tragedy, struggle and conflict" which, in this case, are engendered by class oppression.

68 Taiwan was under Martial Law at the time of this story was written; accordingly, possession and sale of explosives and weapons was strictly forbidden by law.
"Aunt Jinshui," (Jinshui Shen 金水鵝, 1975), on the other hand, is set in the author's home village of Badouzi. This story centres on the travails of Aunt Jinshui who is modelled after the author's own mother. This elderly woman, who is a mother of four grown sons, makes her living vending household goods. According to the tenets of filial piety, Aunt Jinshui should be enjoying her old age with the support of her financially secure sons, one of whom is a banker and another of whom is a successful commercial fisher. Instead, she hawks soap, underwear and cookies through the byways of Badouzi. As the narrative proceeds, the discrepancy between Aunt Jinshui's virtue and poverty and the lack of filiality of her sons becomes clear: she is forced to live in a tumble-down, leaky shack while her sons reside in large, newly-constructed homes in the urban centre of Keelung. At night, Aunt Jinshui lies down in the dark room, for which she is loath even to spare the money to install electric lights, and listens to the "di-dang" of the raindrops as they drip into a tin bucket upon the bed. Outside, the sea wind moans "hoo-hoo." Aunt Jinshui has martyred her life for her sons and they, in turn, have forsaken her.

Calamity arises when it becomes Aunt Jinshui's turn to make her payment to the neighbourhood loan association. In a sustained flashback, the story reveals that Aunt Jinshui's eldest son had come to her on a previous occasion and had asked her for her life savings to invest in a business venture. Unfortunately, the other party in the venture, a minister, has defrauded them of their total assets which came to one million five hundred thousand yuan. Now, Aunt Jinshui is unable to produce even the meagre four or five hundred yuan required by the hui 会. One day, she sets out to the urban centre of Keelung

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69 Anthologized in Jinshui shen 189-256.

70 Wang Tuo revealed this information in a conversation in Taipei at which I was present during the xiangtu wenxue movement. He also stated that there is a strong similarity between Aunt Jinshui's sons in "Aunt Jinshui" and his own brothers.

71 The hui is a voluntary private banking cooperative in which each member puts in a fixed amount. The drawer of the decreasing monthly totals is the person who bids the highest interest rate. The hui organizer takes the total of the contributions, interest-free, the first month.
to borrow the money from her eldest son. There, however, she meets with a chilly reception and is forced to retreat home with nothing to show for her pains. That night, her husband dies from wounds sustained from a fistfight he had engaged in on account of their finances, and Aunt Jinshui is left all alone in this world. Hounded further by her creditors, she disappears.

On Mazu's birthday that spring, the narrative reveals that Aunt Jinshui has been working as a domestic in Taipei and has made her payment to the hui. She also plans to repay the other debts incurred by the family. The story concludes with Aunt Jinshui, apparently as happy, light-hearted and hopeful as when she was vending her goods in Badouzi.

The critic Jing Wang maintains that Aunt Jinshui's suffering arose because of her "submissive, superstitious and fatalistic" attitude and that she was a "suffering Buddha incarnate... the very embodiment of love and hope."72 In brief, Wang's interpretation stems from his (mis)reading of a Chinese female ideal in the light of a stereotypical formula about female behaviour based on a patriarchal ideal. Reading the text in this way is to deny the character her larger symbolic significance. The tenet governing Chinese female behaviour stems from the Confucian code of the "three obediences and four virtues" (sancong side 三從四德), according to which a woman must obey her father in childhood, her husband in marriage and her sons in old age. In this story, Aunt Jinshui is constrained into servitude by this dictum and puts the demands and interests of her sons before her own.

A second source for the distress of this character, however, lies in the corrupting influences of modernization which affect Taiwan society and her sons in particular. Aunt Jinshui's sons have become so corrupted by modernization that they put their own greed ahead of their weak promptings of filiality. The processes of modernization are so strong

72 Jing Wang 65.
in "Aunt Jinshui" that they have eroded this most traditional and deep-rooted of values in Chinese society. The loss of this and other values in "Aunt Jinshui" is the reason that many critics refer to Taiwanese xiangtu wenxue as "conservative."

Wang Tuo's "A Young Country Doctor" (Yige nianqing de xiangxia yisheng, 一個年青的鄉下醫生, 1974), on the other hand, rings with echoes from Lu Xun's "My Old Home." The "I"-narrator of this story is a journalist in the city who has been assigned by his office to write a story on local mining and sea mishaps. Accordingly, he returns to his rural home of Nanliaozzi, a little mining and fishing town filled with the briney smell of the sea on Taiwan's northern coast, and also the place he had left ten years previously. Like the narrator in Lu Xun's "My Old Home," the "I"-narrator in "A Young Country Doctor" finds that many things have changed in his country home. He expects to find clusters of silvery pampas grass dotting the hillside, swaying gently in the golden sunshine and a place "full of sunlight and joy" 為有陽光和快樂; however, he soon discovers that this place exists in his childhood memory only. Before him are "dust-blackened earthen walls" 灰黃的土牆, "piles of gray ash in the colliery grounds" 煤場上一堆一堆灰色的土墩 and an expression of "dark suffering and hopeless resignation" 黑暗悲苦無奈的認命 on the faces of his relatives,  the latter reminiscent of the faces of the narrator's relatives in "My Old Home." In Taipei, this journalist wrote stories about movie stars and MCs who "raked in NT$10,000 per nightly show." 陳晚有一萬元的收入 Thus, he had come to imagine that even his own village must be enjoying its share of the fruits of economic prosperity. Instead, the terrible backwardness he finds is proof that progress has not extended down to the far reaches of Nanliaozzi; instead, the mine of Nanliaozzi has dried up

73 Anthologized in Jinshui shen 165-187.
74 Wang Tuo 167.
75 Ibid. 165.
76 Ibid. 166.
and the village is even more backward than before. As in "My Old Home," the narrator of "A Young Country Doctor" finds, too, that he is equated with the urban "Other" and is rejected. He is addressed as "sir" even by the venerable village elder Tho-hoai Pe-Kong instead of by the more familiar "Tiam-jin-a," which compels the narrator to remark:

"Nothing has changed about the abominable reality of Nanziliao's descent into poverty. What has changed is the communal affection of childhood friendship that I cherish in my memory. This has vanished behind some invisible barrier." 

Over and above its parallels with "My Old Home," "A Young Country Doctor" is an example of Wang Tuo's political ideals transcribed into action. This idealism is realized through the character of Yixiong (Gi-hiong-a in Hokkien), a classmate of Tiam-jin-a's, who was the only village son to succeed in graduating from the Medical Department of National Taiwan University. Yixiong is led by his idealism to decline an offer of a post with a handsome salary made available to him by a private hospital in Taipei. He has also cast aside a scholarship by an American university. Ignoring the warning of his teachers that he is throwing away his career, he instead models himself after Albert Schweitzer and takes the humanitarian decision of returning to his impoverished, backward village to serve as its one and only doctor. Ultimately, however, the loneliness and poverty Yixiong experiences because of the village's limited resources turn his initial euphoria to bitterness, all of which implies that without adequate welfare and other types of economic and social programs to back up a decision of this sort a sacrifice of the type undertaken by Yixiong is in vain.

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77 I have followed the Taiwanese nomenclature as it appears in the text; thus the romanization of the personal names is carried out in the standard Hokkien transcription.

78 Wang 182.
Wang Tuo's "A Young Middle School Teacher" (Yige nianqing de zhongxue jiaoyuan, 一個年輕的中學教師 1977)\(^79\) has a slightly different theme than "A Young Country Doctor." This story chronicles the disillusionment on the part of a young teacher with the frivolous, commercialized vanities of his colleagues. During the xiangtu wenxue movement, however, "A Young Middle School Teacher" was upstaged by Wang Tuo's "Awaiting your Return" (Wang jun zao gui, 等君早歸 1977), which was regarded as a rare epic in the history of Taiwan fiction.\(^80\) Like Wang Tuo's other works, "Awaiting your Return" evolved out of this writer's first-hand understanding of the problems of the fishing village and Taiwan's oppressive class relations. In this story, the misfortunes and suffering of the fisherfolk are traced to the excesses of the propertied class, in this case, the boat owners who exploit the labour of the fisherfolk and, when disaster strikes, refuse to pay out compensation. These owners line their pockets and thereby perpetuate their power in the village. "Awaiting your Return" is unique in that the villagers in this story take things into their own hands and enforce certain changes.

"Awaiting your Early Return" narrates how a young fisherman by the name of Wanfu has drowned at sea in a typhoon. The boat owners refuse to take responsibility for the accident or to make equitable compensation to the bereaved families. Wanfu's wife, Qiulan, goes daily to Wanfu's fishing company and the Fisherman's Association\(^81\) for news of her husband, but her action is to no avail: the typhoon blows over and there is no sign of Wanfu. In the meantime, the families of the missing crew from the boats Huafeng

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\(^{79}\) Anthologized in *Wang jun zao gui* 119-176.

\(^{80}\) Anthologized in *Wang jun zao gui* 189-246.

The use of the term "epic" should be taken lightly here. M.H. Abrams defines "epic" as a "long narrative poem on a great and serious subject, told in an elevated style, and centered on a heroic or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race." (M.H. Abrams 51.) Strictly speaking, there is no such form in Chinese and Taiwanese literature.

\(^{81}\) This is a civic body comprising the owners of the fishing boats or heads of fishing boat companies and the fishermen.
I and Huafeng II also crowd into the company offices for news and to pressure the company to accept responsibility for the loss and to send out a search party. However, the company does not budge; instead, it metes out a paltry compensation to the families who eventually yield and accept this offer. At last, the villagers can take no more. Under the leadership of Qiu Yongfu, an employee of the Fisherman's Association, they resolve to carry out organized resistance and to stand up to the boat owners. The enraged villagers stage a demonstration which ends with the sacking of the Qingchang Fishing Boat Company. Although the results of the demonstration are not narrated in the story, the reader can assume that the mob successfully smashes the paternalistic holdings and practices of the boat owners and establishes greater democracy in the village. This act in the story reflects Wang Tuo's theory of the positive effects of political action and his desire for social justice. The author's dedication at the beginning of "Awaiting your Return" is a poignant testimony of his motivation in writing this story:

This story is dedicated to Third Brother who met his death at sea seven years ago. My greatest respect goes out to my sister-in-law who has undergone untold hardship and deprivation during this time in order to raise my nephews and nieces. The sufferings and heartache of seven long years is inconceivable to the outsider. Her courage and spirit of determination are a very telling example of the strength of ordinary Chinese women.82

Yang Qingchu

Wang Zhenhe, Hwang Chun-ming and Zeng Xinyi write about urban Taipei while Wang Tuo describes the little-known world of Taiwan's fishing villages. A fourth writer of xiangtu wenxue fills an important gap left by these writers: this is Yang Qingchu.

82 Wang Tuo 189.
Taiwan's "working-class writer," who writes almost exclusively about Taiwan's factory world and the workers who pass their lives in this world. As a writer of xiangtu wenxue, Yang also wrote about prostitutes, peasants, entrepreneurs and intellectuals, besides factory workers; however, it is the predominance of the latter in his fiction which gave rise to his popular "working-class" epithet. Yang Qingchu's works are an extensive documentation of the processes of industrialization in rural and small-town Taiwan which brought about the disintegration of Taiwan's traditional lifestyle. In this process of rapid change, individuals, including peasant families, met with destruction to their lifestyle while others experienced a complete metamorphosis of their lives based on the new productive relations. In the words of one critic, Yang Qingchu's depiction of this transformation of Taiwanese society is more vivid than "volumes of social science monographs" and constitutes the primary reason for Yang Qingchu's classification as a xiangtu zuojia.

Yang Qingchu has also been described as a writer of modernization. Though the connotations of this term are very broad, the designation in this case derives from Yang's representation of social change which has been engendered by industrialism. Two of Yang's stories depict the change in fortune experienced by two farming families in Taiwan which resulted from the growing emphasis on industry over agriculture. The shift in government priority given to industry arose as a consequence of Taiwan's successful land reform of the 1950s which was initially intended to create a surplus to support industrial growth. According to the economic philosophy then current, industrial growth at the time was based on food processing which, in turn, was intended to support agricultural development. As industrialization proceeded, however, new industries developed which concentrated on the local manufacture of goods which were then being imported. With the eventual saturation of the local market with these goods, the government subsequently set


84 Ibid.
out to improve the investment climate. Taiwan's continued, stable growth and its successful export-oriented economy can be attributed to the island's attraction as an investment haven but in the process Taiwan's agriculture declined and could no longer offer the viable lifestyle to Taiwan's farmers that it once could. In the 1960s and 1970s young people turned more and more to the industrial sector, abandoning the land and the lifestyle associated with it in order to become wage earners. A fictional account of the abandonment of the land in rural Taiwan is the theme of Yang Qingchu's "Twilight in the Fields" (Lü yuan de huanghun, 禾園的黃昏1972).85

In "Twilight in the Fields," there are only a few members of this once prosperous farming family who are willing to till the soil, and as a consequence, the land has to be sold off. The father of the family in the story has remained working on the farm while his brothers have prospered in industry. His eldest son, Shirong, likewise has stayed on the farm to enable his two younger siblings to receive advanced educations. As the narrative unfolds, Shirong discovers that his sacrifice has also brought him a lifetime of bachelorhood: as girls are no longer willing to be farmers or the wives of farmers, farming boys, for the first time in Taiwan history, have trouble finding partners.

A second story with a theme similar to that in "Twilight in the Fields" is entitled "Born of the Same Root" (Tong gen sheng, 同根生1970).86 In this story, a poor, though resourceful peasant has made good use of a chance idea to make money and has become a successful entrepreneur. His risk-taking, courage and hard work have rewarded him not only with wealth but also with a new status in society which, in turn, attracts a returned Westernized scholar as his son-in-law. His youngest daughter, Chunlian, is neither pretty nor clever but she is fortunate to be the recipient of the fruits of her father's labours, and soon she will be whisked away to a new life in America. Meanwhile, the eldest and

86 Anthologized in Lü yuan de huanghun 71-80.
Prettiest daughter, Chunyun, is trapped in a marriage to a driver of a pedicab to whom she was wed prior to her father's rise in fortunes. Chunyun's shame crystallizes during her sister's wedding, and, in despair, she runs out from the restaurant and returns home. As in "Twilight in the Fields," each sibling in the family in "Born of the Same Root" symbolizes a different stage in Taiwan's blistering pace toward modernization.

In 1975, Yang Qingchu published *Factory Workers* (Gongchang ren 工廠人), a selection of stories about workers which is the major source for Yang's epiteth as a working-class writer. This collection details the exploitation and personal humiliation which are life's daily realities for Taiwan's industrial workers. The nature of these realities is due to Taiwan's new modes of production which are characterized by an absence of strong, independent unions, safety measures or government controls over factory management and administration. All of these echo the conditions in Europe at the time of the Industrial Revolution.

Three years later in 1978, Yang published a second collection about industrial workers entitled *Circle of Factory Girls* (Gongchang nü'er quan 工廠女兒圈). This collection focuses exclusively on factory women and is thus more representative of Taiwan's industrial sector which is made up primarily of women industrial workers. In this volume Yang Qingchu has made use of the female voice to articulate his concerns. This voice is of value to social scientists researching case lives of factory women and conditions in Taiwan's factories. In terms of Chinese literary history, it also indicates that this writer has moved beyond the technique of using women's issues solely as a foil with which to level criticism against general social and political abuses; instead, in several stories at least, Yang articulates these concerns from the point-of-view of the women involved. Accordingly, one can assume that traces of a feminist sensibility exist in the consciousness of this writer.
"Zhaoyu's Youth" (Zhaoyu de qingchun, 昭玉的青春1976) in *Circle of Factory Girls* is a story whose theme runs parallels to and earlier story by Yang entitled "Promotion" (Sheng, 升 1971). The theme in both stories is the difficulties a worker experiences in obtaining a promotion in Taiwan's blue colour sector. While the earlier story features a male construction worker, "Zhaoyu's Youth" is narrated by a female protagonist who has laboured twenty-two years in a factory doing the work load of a regular job. Throughout all this time, however, she has been ranked only as a short-term factory employee. In the normal course of events, girls who enter the factory become promoted to temporary employment within the first year or so. In general, these women regard factory work as "a period of limbo only spent prior to marriage" 扎婚前的一段待嫁的过渡时期而已 because most leave the factory a few years later to get married. In Zhaoyu's case, however, she has not only not been promoted because of an unusual set of circumstances, but she has also found herself unwed at the age of thirty-nine and forced to subsist on a meagre wage at the very bottom of the factory's ranking system. When another factory girl achieves her promotion after labouring for only eight months, Zhaoyu is stung with humiliation and rage. Finally, in desperation, she resolves to rectify her situation. With great courage and determination, Zhaoyu succeeds in getting her request for promotion passed by the various bureaucratic levels in the factory's administration; she also succeeds in obtaining the approval of the factory director. At the story's conclusion, Zhaoyu realizes that her gratitude for her successful promotion is not due to the various people who have assisted her in her struggle; instead, it is due only to her spent youth which has been the price she has paid for her victory.

87 "Zhaoyu's Youth" is anthologized in *Gongchang nü'er quan*, Duanli congkan 16 (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Dunli chubanshe, 1978): 25-50; "Promotion" is anthologized in *Lü yuan de huanghun* 117-135.

88 Yang 27.
"The Tortoise Climbs the Wall and the Mountain is Levelled by Water" (Gui pa bi yu shui beng shan, 龜爬壁與水崩山 1976)\textsuperscript{89} is also narrated from the perspective of a female protagonist, in this case a young woman who leaves her village for the first time in order to labour in a textile factory. After only a few weeks, this worker suffers an accident for which the factory refuses to assume responsibility. Ultimately, the financial burden for the girl's medication and hospitalization is shifted onto the girl's family. "The Tortoise Climbs the Wall" paints a bleak picture of the monotonous lives of the girls in the factory, the dismal factory environment and the humiliation and abuse the girls suffer at the hands of male managers and other labourers. The reference in the title derives from the analogy of the girls' lives with the tortoise's slow ascent up the wall which contrasts with the fountain-like wealth of the factory owners.

The final story under discussion also deals with the theme of accident, hospitalization and the refusal of the factory in question to assume responsibility. The dynamics of the storyline in "Our Chinese Boss" (Ziji de jingli, 自己的經理 1977)\textsuperscript{90} derive from the oppressive class relations of Taiwan's industrial sector. In "Our Chinese Boss," Mrs. Liu is working the evening shift in the Pickling Room of the Wilson Electronics Corporation late one night when a phial of sulphuric acid explodes. The narrative relates that the explosion was like a bomb and filled the room with thick, black smoke. At the instant of the explosion, Mrs. Liu screamed in terror, and sulphuric acid shot into her mouth and down into her lungs and stomach. This incident provides the setting for the remainder of the narrative. The graphic description of Mrs. Liu's working conditions are worth presenting here:

\begin{quote}
All year long, her constant companions were sulphuric acid, nitric acid, glacial acetic acid, hydrochloric acid, phosphoric acid and other chemicals. The acid was drawn
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{89} Anthologized in Gongchang nu'er quan 93-130.

\textsuperscript{90} Anthologized in Gongchang nu'er quan 145-161.
up from iron vats into a tower-like structure and directed into cisterns. From there it was siphoned into phials. The mixture was then transferred into a vibrator to be combined with silica and other materials. After this treatment, the materials were then placed in an oven and dried by jets of hot air. This was the last stage before it was conveyed to the production line for processing.  

After the explosion, the narrative relates how the Wilson Corporation refuses to accept responsibility for the accident and awards Mrs. Liu a meagre five thousand yuan in compensation. One month passes, at the end of which Liu's husband goes to the corporation to get the labour insurance form which is needed in order to extend his wife's hospitalization. Liu is informed, however, that the company has dismissed the worker for negligence, thus making her ineligible for insurance. With no way out of his predicament and his children suffering from increased privation, Mr. Liu finally enlists the assistance of a public-minded assemblyman who fortunately goes out of his way to rectify the situation. The assemblyman is surprised to discover that the factory is run by a foreign director. According to him, foreign manufacturers usually have a better understanding of what is involved in an industrial society. The assemblyman asserts, "They're not like our manufacturers who all hang on to the old concepts from the past agrarian society. When an employee gets injured, they turn a blind eye."  

Ultimately, three individuals from the Bureau of Inspection for Factories and Mines are sent on a tour of inspection of the factory. These inspectors make suggestions to Robert, the factory director, concerning the factory's ventilation system and also recommend that the injured worker be given leave with pay. Robert maintains that he knew nothing about the accident, and it is his turn to be surprised when he discovers that the section manager in question, Mr. Ling, not only failed to report the incident but took on  

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91 Yang 145.  
92 Ibid. 158.
the responsibility himself for dismissing Mrs. Liu. The narrative concludes with Robert's remark that "Mr. Ling is Chinese like yourselves. Why would a Chinese boss treat his own people like this? I don't understand!" 凌瑞理是你們中國人，我不懂你們自己中國人АО瑞理為甚麼對他自己的同胞這樣做？我不懂！

The ending of "Our Chinese Boss" is ambiguous and ironic, considering that the xiangtu wenxue movement was, in essence, xenophobic. An explanation for this can be found in Yang Qingchu's own life which improved as Taiwan's standard of living improved. The author himself attributed this improvement to Taiwan's relations with the West. Thomas Gold states it succinctly when he recounts that as the economy in Taiwan flourished, new opportunities became available, and the Taiwanese people moved from illiteracy to literacy and from poverty to the satisfaction of basic material needs. The extent to which foreign capital played a direct role in this is debatable; however, Western technology, concepts of health care and popular education, which filtered into Taiwan through the medium of modernization, played a direct and credible part in the raising of Taiwan's living standards. This phenomenon cannot be used to dismiss the anti-foreign ideology of xiangtu wenxue; it can, however, serve as a reminder that this movement should be put in its proper perspective: it was an outgrowth of a unique period of nationalism in Taiwan's modern history.

Chen Yingzhen

The last writer under discussion in connection with the xiangtu wenxue movement is Chen Yingzhen. Chen's fictional works from the 1970s are thematically quite different from Wang Tuo or Yang Qingchu's, even though all these writers subscribe to a socialist

93 Ibid. 161.
94 Gold 12.
ideology. Chen's works of the xiangtu wenxue movement date from his release from prison in 1975, which is when he began writing about corporate business. Chen culled material for these works from his first-hand experience in a large business corporation in which the writer was employed prior to opening his own printing business. The economic-political discourse of this phase of Chen Yingzhen's fiction reflects this author's middle-class, pseudo-Marxist or Leninist predisposition. It also reflects his occasional xenophobic bias.

Two of Chen Yingzhen's 1970s works are particularly representative of the xiangtu wenxue ideology during the peak of the movement. These stories are "One Day in the life of the Office Animal" (Shangban zu de yi ri, 上班族的一日) and "Night Freight" (Ye xing huoche, 夜行貨車) which were reprinted in the 1983 volume, Washington Building, Part One: Clouds (Huashengdun dalou, di yi bu: yun) which represents the mature phase of Chen's fiction about commerce. This second collection is set in the world of urban corporate business and includes Chen's fiction about commerce which he wrote after the xiangtu wenxue movement.

In his introduction to Washington Building Chen maintains that the profit motive has vast implications for human material and spiritual life: it molds our behaviour, thought, and sensibilities. Accordingly, this volume is about people under the influence of this motive and the general effects of commercial relations. Chen also maintains that this collection does not pretend to be an economic or political analysis, which, he implies, belongs to the academic world.

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95 This information derives from my personal acquaintance with Chen Yingzhen.


98 Ibid. 1.
"One Day in the Life of the Office Animal" does, indeed, entail a description of the effects on the individual human psyche of commercial business relations. This story comprises a portrait of one day in the life of an assistant office manager who is suffering the effects of severe anomie. The manager of this large corporate business has just quit his job in disgust at what he feels are the fraudulent business practices of the members of his corporation, and the day in question is the first day he spends in his state of post-job blues. In essence, this day is spent in confusion and disorientation, a situation engendered by the breakdown of the manager's normal routine. The anomie constituting the tone of this story is the same as that characterizing much of Chen's fiction.

"One Day in the Life of the Office Animals" narrates how the protagonist goes to lunch in a familiar restaurant upon awakening late to his new life. There he is recognized as an employee in the corporate "Washington Building," a signifying element and leitmotif in the stories in this collection. At this point, the diachronic present fragments, and the narrative poses a mixed collage of memories from the protagonist's past life. This is a dream world in which the protagonist is beset by images from his personal and professional life--clues to a past he has repressed along his route to professional success. He indulges, for instance, in a long revery about a mistress called Rose whose image is triggered by a resemblance to the waitress in the restaurant. This image becomes a vital, synchronic link in the protagonist's reconstruction of his past. After he returns home, the protagonist rediscovers his photography equipment which represents a second memory-link, this time with the world of his college days. More importantly, however, this equipment serves as the medium for the concrete, palpable projection of Rose's image onto the reality of the family video screen. With this act, the protagonist's spiritual crisis is resolved, and "One Day in the Life of the Office World" concludes with the restoration of the present. Returning the video to its case, the protagonist firmly seals the cover on both
the camera and his past life. Therewith, the past has become but a brief memory-image in
the diachronic passage of the present.

Chen's "Night Freight," on the other hand, is concerned less with the individual
psyche and more with the general effect on Chinese morale of international corporate
business. Though the author argues otherwise, this story is also more deeply analytical,
posing a critical treatise of American and Japanese cultural/economic infiltration. "Night
Freight" is based upon the author's application of the dependency theory of economic
relations.99

"Night Freight" is set in the Taipei branch of Malamud International, an American
electronics corporation. The dynamics of this story are thus directly linked to the presence
of American capital in Taiwan. These dynamics, however, serve only as the backdrop for
a second, angst-ridden theme: the theme of love and its elusiveness. In the narrative, Liu
Xiaoling, who is an employee of the Taipei branch company and daughter of a former
prominent Nationalist politician of northern pre-war China, searches for a fulfilling love
relationship from among her male office colleagues. This search, however, only leads her
through a series of unhappy love relationships, the first involving Lin Rongping, the
manager of the finance section in the corporation, and the second, Zhan Yihong, who is a
small-town Taiwanese intellectual come to Taipei to make it big. The story is narrated
through forward-moving flashbacks from the perspective of the omniscient narrator.

When Lin Rongping refuses to terminate his marriage and marry Liu Xiaoling, she
becomes distraught and redirects her affections onto the figure of Zhan Yihong. Zhan

99 The dependency theory, based on Leninist theories of imperialism, holds that the international division of
labour has led to a situation in which the rise of foreign trade and the arrival of foreign capital from the "core"
developed or "metropolitan" country, for instance, the United States and Japan) lie at the heart of the
underdevelopment in the "periphery" (or "satellite") nation, (in this instance, Taiwan). (Alice H. Amsden,
"Taiwan's Economic History: A Case of Etatisme and a Challenge to the Dependency Theory," Modern
China, 5 [1979]: 342.) According to this theory, dependent nations would inevitably become economic
failures. Taiwan would appear to be a paradox where this theory is concerned; nonetheless, a second social
scientist argues that the costs of dependency do, in fact, exist in Taiwan, but they are simply hidden under a
unique set of conditions. (Hill Gates, "Dependency and the Part-time Proletariat in Taiwan," Modern China,
V [1979]: 381, 382, 385-405.)
Yihong, however, is unable to reconcile himself with the fact that Liu Xiaoling is a "cast-off" of Lin Rongping's. Unable to control his jealousy, Zhan Yihong perpetrates a number of scenes of violence and battering against Liu Xiaoling. Finally, she resolves to call off her engagement to Zhan. These tumultuous passions are interwoven with "Night Freight"'s xiangtu wenxue ideological and xenophobic thematic.

The fourth item enumerated by Joseph Lau in his xiangtu wenxue schematization is the "affirmation of the necessity for national self-respect against the effrontery and vulgarity of the 'Ugly American' and the 'Lecherous Japanese.'" Lau's formulation applies directly to Chen's story in a couple of places, the first of which is a scene in the hot springs resort area of Beitou. The activities of the Japanese tourists in this scene represent the degradation of Chinese women by the "Lecherous Japanese"; they are thus a direct illustration of the anti-foreign sentiment of this movement. The scene takes place outside an inn called the "Little Hot Sea":

A taxi sped up to the side door of the Little Hot Sea. It screeched to a halt directly in front of the porch. Two Japanese who were presumably drunk were half-pulled, half-dragged out of the taxi by a couple of call girls. Smiling sweetly, the proprietress raced down off the porch to greet them.

A second allusion to the Japanese is based on a Taiwanese cultural joke originating during the Japanese colonial period. During this period, the colonial rulers fabricated an image about the "uncivilized" Taiwanese who, they maintained, "urinated indiscriminately" in public places. The Japanese rulers made good use of this image to enforce their

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100 Beitou is northern Taiwan's most notorious resort area. It was formerly a Japanese spa, and at present it has several inns and hotels which offer hot sulphur baths and prostitution. Beitou is also mentioned in Huang Chunming's "Little Widow" in the section entitled "Summit Talks." In this story, Beitou is referred to as the subject of an article in Time magazine about US military men bathing with callgirls in the Beitou hot springs. Beitou subsequently became a metaphor in xiangtu wenxue for the degradation of Chinese women by Americans and Japanese.

101 Chen 244.
stringent colonial regulations established to control the local population. This image, however, probably originally arose from the Taiwanese reference to the Japanese as the "four-footer," (si-kha-ha 四腳仔 in Hokkien, meaning "dog"), which also refers to the indiscriminate habit of the Japanese of urinating in public. In "Night Freight" this metaphor is transposed onto the figure of the Japanese tourist and businessman and forms the basis for the following scene:

At this moment, the sound of water flowing down from a high distance suddenly attracted their attention. They looked down from the dark porch. In the shadowy light of an Oriental-style stone lamp in the little garden, a Japanese tourist was urinating. She immediately turned away. He continued smoking and remarked with a smile, "The Japanese really practise 'unsystematic etiquette' (you li wu ti)."

"Unsystematic etiquette?"
"Ordinarily they speak very politely, bowing back and forth. But then they go and urinate anywhere and raise hell when they're drinking..."102

The anti-foreign sentiments in "Night Freight" are brought into full play at the tension-laden conclusion of this story. The occasion is a farewell banquet given in honour of Liu Xiaoling, whose failed relationship with Zhan Yihong has prompted her to go to the United States, and for Mr. Dasmann who has concluded his duties as auditor for Malamud International's Pacific Office. Liu Xiaoling is flanked at the banquet table by Dasmann on one side and the American boss, Mr. Morgenthau, on the other. Both men compete for her attention. Opposite them, Lin Rongping and Zhan Yihong are conversing, the latter of whom is also mulling over the final, explosive argument which had erupted between himself and Liu Xiaoling. The conversation between Morgenthau and Dasmann turns to politics, and the former asserts that, with reference to Taiwan's precarious position in the current world of diplomacy, multinational corporations such as Malamud would "never

102 Ibid. 246.
allow Taiwan to be wiped off the map."  He follows this with the remark that American businessmen love Taipei, which "is a million times better than New York" but that "you f...ing Chinese think the United States is a f...ing paradise." This remark is highly offensive to Zhan Yihong. He takes to his feet, demands an apology of Mr. Morgenthau then storms out of the banquet hall. Liu Xiaoling also rises to her feet and runs after him, and "Night Freight" comes to its enigmatic conclusion. Outside the hall, Zhan Yihong and Liu Xiaoling walk together in silence. They renew their engagement to be married, and then he begs her not to go to the U.S. Instead, he wishes her to return to the countryside with him. The story concludes with the image of the night freight-- "the black, powerful, long, night freight, the night freight that thunders south toward his old home in the country." Zhan Yihong's decision to return to the Taiwanese countryside amounts to a final statement of the rejection of Westernization on the part of this small-town Taiwanese intellectual. Zhan's decision stems either from the angst engendered by Westernization or from his inability to adapt to the new age conditions. Caught in the process of the metamorphosis of Chinese society, Zhan turns back defeated to his traditional home life which he once saw only in terms of bondage. As elsewhere in Chinese fiction, the country home in "Night Freight" symbolizes a refuge both from the degrading nature of the city and from the infiltration of the Other. This instance of a "cultural involution," by which this phenomenon was referred in Taiwan at this time, is also reminiscent of traditional Chinese eremetism: both are a local cultural response to foreign invasion.

In conclusion, Chen Yingzhen's "Night Freight" typifies many of the complex, convoluted motifs which make up the xiangtu wenxue paradigm. The desire to expel the

103 Ibid. 285.
104 Ibid. 286. The second part of this quote is in English in the original.
105 Ibid. 289.
foreigners is coupled with a totalistic rejection of modernity, and this, at least in Zhan Yihong's case, has once again raised the spectre of the pre-Westernized, transcendent China reminiscent of Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* of the 1960s. What Zhan Yihong will find in his southern home and whether he will be happy there, not to mention Liu Xiaoling, is beyond the realm of speculation. What we can question, however, is when and how the complex, thorny issues of modernity will be resolved in Chinese society.
Chapter Six

China's "Nativist Culture" (Xiangtu wenhua) of the 1980s

At the end of the line flew Azazello, gleaming with the steel of his armour. The moon had altered his face as well. The absurd, revolting fang had disappeared without a trace, and his blindness turned out to have been false. Both of his eyes were the same, empty and blank, and his face was white and cold. Now Azazello was flying in his true shape, the demon of the waterless desert, the killer-demon.

--Mikhail Bulgakov, The Master and Margarita

Feeling her way along through the empty bedrooms she perceived the continuous rumble of the termites as they carved the wood, the snipping of the moths in the clothes closets, and the devastating noise of the enormous red ants that had prospered during the deluge and were undermining the foundations of the house.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude

In the mid-1980s a type of literature emerged in China in which writers again turned to the countryside to make certain statements about contemporary life and society. For some of these writers, the countryside was their rural home or the locus of China's "nativist culture" (xiangtu wenhua 鄉土文化) they understood well. Others, on the other hand, came to understand this nativist culture when they were "sent down," or rusticated, during the years of the Cultural Revolution. Nonetheless, all of them, without exception, used their knowledge and understanding of this culture to make certain judgements about contemporary Chinese life, whether this concerned the Chinese Communist Party and its policies in the countryside, traditional culture and values or modern urban life. These writers are not xiangtu zuojia per se, that is, they do not write about the customs, scenery or dialect of their rural homes; nonetheless, through their writing they make certain important contributions to our understanding of Chinese peasant realities and Chinese
traditional life. Thus I have included them for discussion here. These writers and their works are testimony of the fact that understanding the peasant and Chinese tradition are the central, vital issues in China's ongoing search for modernity.

There are four writers included for discussion here. The first of these is Gao Xiaosheng (1928), whose designation as a "peasant writer" (nongmin zuojia 農民作家) stems from the "peasant fiction" (nongminxiaoshuo 農民小說) which he began writing in 1983. Gao was sent down for more than twenty years to the rural areas of Jiangsu province, and, during this period, he first began to learn about Chinese peasant life and the rural policies of the Chinese Communist Party. Gao's early works of the late 1970s are based on this experience and comprise virulent satires of the Party's inefficiencies and corruption which he observed in the countryside. His works after 1983, on the other hand, present his conceptions of the ideal peasant striving for an ideal life under the conditions of reform. My discussion of Gao's works focus primarily on his early works.

The other three writers in this discussion belong to the school of writing known as the "Searching for Roots" school (xungen pai 尋根派). These writers were also rusticated during the Cultural Revolution; their fiction, however, is not as concerned as Gao Xiaosheng's with the myth-making properties of the Chinese Communist Party. Instead, these writers are concerned with more fundamental questions of Chinese social life, specifically, the issue of Chinese traditional culture. This preoccupation on the part of the xungen writers reestablishes culture as the fundamental issue in China's search for modernity.

At the height of popularity of xungen literature, a number of debates raged in Chinese intellectual circles which summarized in telescopic form the central issues and

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problems expressed in this fiction. These were the "cultural exploration" debates (wenhua tansuo 文化探索) which focused on the problem which has obsessed Chinese intellectuals for the last one hundred years of Chinese history: the value of China's traditional culture for twentieth-century modernity. The many problems which have plagued China since the mid-1800s stem from China's difficulty in bridging the gap to modernity. Problems such as the integration of traditional Chinese culture into modern life, the unresolved tensions between traditional and modern values and the multi-dimensional problems arising from China's relations with the West are just a few of the issues evincing the thorny nature of this process. These issues obsessed Chinese intellectuals such as Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei in the late nineteenth century and Lu Xun in the second and third decades of the twentieth. More recently, these issues reemerged during the mid-1980s when China reopened its doors to the West after three decades of isolation under Chinese Communist rule. At that time, they became formulated as a number of questions, such as: How should the tensions between Chinese traditional and modern values be resolved? How do Chinese cultural values compare to Western, or putatively universal, values, and what is the nature of each? What does it mean or should it mean to be both Chinese and modern in today's global community? The nature of traditional Chinese culture, its impact on the character of the Chinese people and its relation to China's modernization are central to the cultural exploration debates and can be summed up as one question: What are the roots of Chinese culture? This is the question which lies at the heart of xungen fiction.

The reemergence of the culture issue in the mid-1980s, which came hard on the heels of three decades of Communist rule, reflects the fact that Maoism did little or nothing to resolve the basic problems of Chinese rural life. The questions these writers pose in their fiction are all the more egregious in light of this fact and augment the dubious image of an

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ideology that attempted to supercede other more traditional ways of thought and practice unifying Chinese life. The first of these xungen writers discussed here is Shi Tiesheng 史鐵生 (1951--), a rusticated "educated youth" (zhìqìngnián 智青年), who brought back a positive view of traditional culture from his experience labouring on a rural commune deep in the Shaanxi countryside. This culture, he implies, must be nurtured and protected in order to contribute to China's modern life. Han Shaogong and Mo Yan, on the other hand, occasionally partake of a Lu Xun type of cultural iconoclasm in their examination of Chinese culture. Han's fiction is marked by certain ambivalences; nonetheless, his "roots of Chinese culture" point to an egregious and cyclical non-development of traditional Chinese culture which is harshly condemned in at least one of his fictional works. Mo Yan's fiction, on the other hand, embraces a unique subjectivity, which is one and the same with his retrieval of painful childhood memories. The conditions in Mo Yan's nightmarish rural world, based on the perceptions of an abused young child, are aggravated by the unfeeling and sometimes violent practices of rural Party cadres. There are many aspects of Mo Yan's rural world which are despicable, yet the spirituality found there is enduring. In sum, the three xungen writers discussed in this chapter tackle certain fundamental issues of Chinese life which reemerged with the fading of Maoism in China.

Besides the question of culture, Chinese fiction in the 1980s is characterized by a number of stylistic features which make it unique in the history of modern Chinese literature. One is its release, or "literary dissidence" in Leo Ou-fan Lee's words, from the tyranny of traditional forms, especially May Fourth realism. Realism has tended to be the dominant mode of discourse governing Chinese fiction since May Fourth. This discourse has tended to privilege content over form or technique and the nation over the individual or
gender issues and accounts for the general tone of didacticism in much of modern Chinese literature. As a result of the constraints imposed by the realist mode, modern Chinese literature has tended to be univocal and nationalistic and reflects Chinese writers' "obsession with China," as C.T. Hsia so aptly put it. In the 1980s, however, Chinese writers began to look elsewhere for models of non-realistic artistic inspiration. The presence in this literature of cultural symbols not traditionally Chinese is a second feature of the fiction of this period and is symptomatic of the fact that Chinese writers are searching for, and finding, forms and metaphors beyond those in their own social and cultural spheres. For the first time since May Fourth, Chinese writers have been exposed to Western literary influences which began to flood into their nation in the wake of the fall of the Gang of Four (1978). These literary influences are very diverse and include a number of avant-garde techniques which are collectively known as "Modernism" (xiandaizhuyì 現代主義). Non-linear plot lines or plotless narratives, multiple narrators, stream-of-consciousness, metafiction, magic realism, surrealism and other types of techniques characterize this period of fiction-writing and reflect the increasing artistic innovation by which contemporary literature has come to be known.

During the three decades of Chinese Communist rule, literature was heavily circumscribed by government policy toward the arts; as a result, the only literature officially condoned during that period was the "worker-peasant-soldier" type of Chinese socialist realism. The works of Zhao Shuli and Zhou Libo, popularly known as xiangtu wenxue, were inspired by the themes of socialist construction and fall into this literary category. From the fall of the Gang of Four to 1981-- a period also referred to as the Second Hundred Flowers-- socialist realism gave way to a resurgence of a May Fourth

5 M.H. Abrams defines Modernism as the style of literature consisting in the experimentation with new literary forms in order to render the immense panorama of disorder, futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. A second characteristic is the examination of the traditional modes and assumptions underlying social organization, morality and the conceptions of the human self. (Abrams 109.)

6 Michael Duke 30.
type of realism. This was endorsed by the liberalized literary policies set in place by Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Yang in 1979 at the Fourth Congress of Writers and Artists. For the first time since 1949 Chinese literature and the other arts experienced a release from the dictates that literature serve the political needs of the Chinese Communist Party.\(^7\) The first form of realism was the "literature of the wounded" (\textit{shanghen wenxue} 伤痕文学) which recounted the excesses, pain and chaos of the Cultural Revolution years. This was followed by an outpouring of critical realism which was again written according to the conventions of May Fourth realism.\(^8\) On the basis of this, one can conclude that the thirty years of Chinese Communist rule, including the ten chaotic years of the Cultural Revolution, did little to impair the staying power of realism. Its survival ability has been summed up by Leo Ou-fan Lee who maintains that realism has traditionally been considered the correct approach to literature. In Lee's words realism constitutes a "kind of patriotic pan-moralism" governing all forms of creative writing.\(^9\)

During the year 1981 and again in the period from 1983 to 1984, writers suffered government interference in the form of the "spiritual pollution" campaign which included a campaign against Modernism. Western literary influences were disparaged by the government and feared by critics who warned that Chinese literature would become the "tail of Western Modernism." 西方現代派的尾巴\(^10\) Nonetheless, the new intellectual trends continued unabated with further promises of freedom in 1984 and 1985. These two


\(^8\) Duke, "Reinventing China" 30.

\(^9\) Lee 161.


Compared with Taiwan's Modernism of the decade of the 1950s China's Modernism of this period is somewhat different although many of the techniques borrowed from the West are the same. Modernism in Taiwan came in the wake of a fifty-year period of deracination brought on by Japanese rule in which Taiwan was virtually cut off from its historic and cultural roots. The fear of Western cultural imperialism implied in this statement is relatively less justified in China, and this is borne out by the literature.
years saw the greatest experimentation with aesthetic form and technique, and in this atmosphere of relaxation the constraints of traditional forms diminished even further. While realism continued as a fundamental narrative mode, writers also dabbled in non-traditionalist modes such as those listed above. Freed from traditional narrative and ideological constraints, the literature of this period foreshadows the increasing artistry and pluralism of modern Chinese fiction.

Gao Xiaosheng

Gao Xiaosheng is the supreme satirist of post-Mao China, a designation which arises primarily from his short story "Li Shunda Builds a House" (Li Shunda zao wu, 李順大造屋 1979). Gao was also the author of a series of short stories which revolve around the character Chen Huansheng. These stories, published between February 1979 and March 1982, are less consistently ironic; nonetheless, they do continue, albeit to a somewhat lesser degree, the tone first established in "Li Shunda Builds a House." Gao's irony consists in letting loose a battery of satiric barbs aimed at the hopeless inefficiency of the Chinese Communist Party. The Party's inefficiency in Gao's fiction derives from its whirlwind shifts of policy, bureaucratic botchery and graft which create a nightmarish tangle in which the peasant is helplessly immeshed. This tangle is further exacerbated by the peasants' own belief system, built around the assumption that socialism is infallible. Thus, if something goes wrong the peasants are led to believe it is because they themselves have fallen captive to the "wrong" kind of (revisionist or capitalist) thoughts. The illusion that the socialist system and polices and the Party itself came into being with the peasants' best interests in mind lies at the very foundation of Gao's satire and, this, for the peasant, creates a host of ontological problems. A basic one of these-- that the peasant has to strive

to be worthy of socialism--implies his/her redundancy within this system. On the premise that Chinese Communism is a system for the people and by the people, the stage is set in Gao Xiaosheng's fiction for the brick-by-brick dismantling of the subtle myth-making properties of the Chinese Communist Party.

As mentioned above, Gao Xiaosheng is known as a "peasant writer," a designation which arose from the peasant fiction he wrote after 1983. These stories deal with the developing tide of political and economic reforms in rural China which were put in place as the result of the Fifth National People's Congress of 1979. This Congress proclaimed economic modernization to be the national goal of the "new period of development," and, at the village level, this was implemented in the form of village cottage industry. The theme of the onset of private industry in the village first appeared in Gao Xiaosheng's Chen Huansheng series, and it was subsequently expanded in his fiction after 1983.

Though Gao Xiaosheng is classed as a "peasant writer," I have included him in this study of *xiangtu wenxue* because of his treatment of the countryside. This treatment comprises the fourth kind in the *xiangtu wenxue* typology beginning with Lu Xun and further developed by the *xiangtu* writers of the 1920s. This fourth type contrasts strongly both with Lu Xun's antitradi tionalism which Lu Xun conceived within the ruralist context and with Taiwan's *xiangtu wenxue* in which the countryside is the refuge from the forces of modernization. Needless to say, it also differs radically from Shen Congwen's romanticism. In this fourth type, the countryside is the locus for the examination of the inefficiency and corruption of the Chinese Communist Party, or, as the Chinese sources put it, "the reactionary nature of the leftist line." 12 In this type, the peasant is caught up in the arbitrary winds of Communist practice and is buffeted about like a hapless leaf. This depiction is the natural extension of the representation of the peasant in the works of Zhao Shuli, and it is precisely for this reason that Gao Xiaosheng

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is referred to as the "living Zhao Shuli" 活着的趙樹理 in the Chinese secondary sources.

Unlike Zhao Shuli, Gao Xiaosheng does not hail from a peasant background nor was he equipped with first-hand understanding of the peasants from an early age. Instead, he was born in 1928 in a village in Wujin county, Jiangsu province, in the family of a middle school teacher. Though his father was frequently unemployed, and the family often suffered economic privation, Gao was ultimately able to attend the economics department of the Shanghai Law School. Gao's writing career began after 1949 with his publication of a number of short stories, poems and plays. During the Hundred Flowers campaign he was one of a number of intellectuals involved in the publication of a journal entitled The Explorer (Tanqiu zhe 撲求者). The manifesto of this journal stemmed from the belief that literature must "boldly intervene in life" 大膽干預生活 and resulted in Gao Xiaosheng being branded a Rightist in 1958. Gao was subsequently sent for more than twenty years to the rural areas of Jiangsu province, and it was during this period that he was first exposed to the countryside and began to learn about peasant life. In Jiangsu, Gao lived a peasant style of life and learned many of the skills involved in agricultural cultivation. This prolonged experience ultimately forged his characteristic peasant style which has been compared to that of the Cultural Revolution novelist Hao Ran. In part, Gao's "peasant style" is one reason that this writer can be included in this discussion of xiangtu wenxue.

14 Decker 108.
15 Ibid. 109.
16 Lee 173.
In many ways, Gao Xiaosheng remains a traditionally realist writer. His style is a combination of elements from China's oral storytelling tradition and techniques of satire and symbols through which he channels his dissenting views about Communism. It is also enriched by elements of irony, allegory, metaphor, puns and proverbs, the latter two of which endow it with the folksy quality reminiscent of the works of Zhao Shuli. "Li Shunda Builds a House," Gao's best work of political satire, is basically a work of realism but as a satire it is also comparable to the great works of satire from world literature, such as the novels of the Russian political satirist, Mikhail Bulgakov. Both Gao and Bulgakov wrote under the political constraints of their respective countries which compelled them to make use of forms which would provide a cover for their moral outrage and strident criticism.17 Bulgakov, however, is much less constrained by realism than Gao. In his masterpiece, The Master and Margarita, for instance, the Russian writer makes extensive use of fable, satanic fantasy and slapstick comedy with which he creates "an ironic parable on power and its corruption, on good and evil, human frailty and the strength of love."18 "Li Shunda Builds a House," on the other hand, is relatively more constrained by the Chinese tradition of realism which had an impact even on the Chinese satiric mode.19 "Li Shunda Builds a House" is accordingly less fantastical, and the narration is more linear and chronological than Bulgakov's novel. Accordingly, it closely reflects the current political realities of the time.

17 Bulgakov wrote his novel during Stalinist Russia; it was subsequently suppressed for twenty-six years.

Of the many different types and definitions of satire, that described by James W. Nichols is the closest in proximity to the type examined here. Nichols states that the "satirist may be actuated by a desire to reform, or to correct foolish or vicious sets of ideas of attitudes; however, he is also actuated by the pleasure of employing satiric devices and of evading the usual restrictions put on the expression of aggressive impulses." (James W. Nichols, Insinuation: The Tactics of English Satire [The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1971]: 35.)


19 The close connection between satire and reality was stressed by Lu Xun when he stated, "The works of what is called satire now are for the most part reality"; and again, "The life of satire is reality; it need not be an actual event which once occurred, but it must be a possible situation." (Lu Xun, "Lun fengci," Lun Xun quanjji, 6: 278-279, 368.)
The protagonist of "Li Shunda Builds a House" is a peasant whose dream is to build for himself a brick, three-room house. This dream has come to Li only since land reform; prior to 1949 this peasant had never even entertained the thought of buying himself an ox, let alone a house. The mythopoetic structure of the narrative is thus set in place early in the text with the introduction of socialism as the symbol of the material betterment of the life of the peasants. This myth, however, is ultimately proved false in the story which reflects the nature of this narrative not only as a satire but also as an allegory. In this case, the allegory reveals the truth about the operations of socialism in China which are spurious to say the least. A few pages later in the text, the mythopoetic structure intensifies and comes into clearer focus when the protagonist reflects that it is the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Government which "allowed him to have what he thought was such a lofty goal."20 The protagonist accordingly vows to be loyal to socialism and to "follow the Party all the way."21 At the same time that he makes this vow, he castigates himself for his self-doubts: perhaps his wish to forego an upstairs room and a telephone, both of which symbolize the achievement of socialism in China, is evidence of his insufficient faith in socialism? Li Shunda's cycle of self-doubts and subsequent vows to improve himself, which so tellingly reveal his psychology, not only foreshadows the increasing ontological dilemma of this poor, benighted peasant but also begs the question about whether socialism is worthy of such self-sacrifice. The answer to this, the narrator implies, is a rhetorical "no," and the balance of this bitter satire is given over to the examination of this truth.

For the next three decades, Li Shunda and his family scrimp and save; Li himself labours as a trader in sugar and rags in order to procure the materials he needs with which to build his house. Three times Li succeeds in obtaining the needed resources only to be

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21 Ibid. 29.
subsequently frustrated each time in true Sisyphean fashion. The first time occurs under the forced collectivization of the Great Leap Forward when Li's bricks are taken away in order to construct an iron-smelting furnace. The second time occurs during the Cultural Revolution and the temporary victory of the rebel faction over the "capitalist-roaders" in which Li loses his accumulated savings of 217 yuan to the tough-guy rebel chairman of the commune's brick and tile factory. The third and final occasion arises when Li once again has the funds in hand but the country is experiencing nation-wide shortages. This time, Li is unable to procure the bricks and other materials he needs for his house. In desperation, in the year 1977, Li "goes through the back door" and through this act ultimately realizes his dreams. This act, however, merely reinforces the dubious nature of the peasants' existence within the operations of socialism.

According to Gao Xiaosheng, Li Shunda is a victim not only of constantly shifting Party policies but also of his own peasant character as a "true follower" (gengen pai 跟跟派). Gao explains that the character of the Chinese peasant is such that for thousands of years he/she has been searching for an object of worship. First there was the figure of the emperor which the peasants worshipped; this was followed by the Chinese Communist Party which the peasants also worshipped even when the Party practised wrong lines of policy. Accordingly, the peasants' slave mentality has led them to thankfully worship anything which has caused their lives to be even marginally better. For Li Shunda, the peasant who has been transposed from real life to the world of fiction, any thought or act contrary to this belief involves his fear of becoming a "black pan." The black pan is a political euphemism for the Maoist concept of revisionism, and the naive and hapless Li

22 The omniscient narrator of the story states about Li Shunda that "He was ready and willing to follow the Party all the way. Everything he did was testimony to that fact." (Gao 29.)


24 The original Chinese phrase for this expression is bei heiguo 背黑髪 meaning to "blacklist."
interprets this concept literally--his fear of transformation even keeps him awake at night. Gao's evaluation of the peasant may be justified; nonetheless, as he states later, the real cause of the peasants' present and ongoing ignorance is the Chinese Communist Party. Gao reasons in a second statement that an equitable life for the peasants under the socialist ideology is possible only if the Party realigns its priorities to serve the interests of those for whom it originally claimed to came into power. Only then can socialism and the four modernizations be achieved. Gao's statement is as follows: "Under the leadership of the Communist Party, only if our country allows the nine hundred thousand peasants to have sufficient awareness, sufficient understanding of culture and science and sufficient modern capabilities to take care of things and also causes them to have the idea of becoming the masters of the nation and the skills to do so can our socialist enterprise stand in an unbeatable position and the four modernizations advance quickly." Gao's vision of this "master-type" of peasant appears in his stories of 1983 and later.

After "Li Shunda Builds a House," Gao Xiaosheng wrote the Chen Huansheng series in which the peasants enjoy an improved material existence. The tone in this series has accordingly shifted from one of strident satire to one of gentle irony, a shift which reflects the author's relative approval of the systemic changes which were then underway. The improvement in the peasants' lives in these stories reflects the economic changes which began to envelop the villages at the end of the 1970s and which were officially set in place by the Fifth National People's Congress in 1979. These stories revolve around the anti-heroic peasant character named Chen Huansheng who first makes his appearance in

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Yu hua, 7 (1980), quoted in Li Xing 69. (Original citation is incomplete.)
"Head of a Funnel Household" (Loudou hu zhu, 漏斗戶主 n.d.).26 The term "funnel household" was in common parlance before 1949, and during the Cultural Revolution it was reappropriated and applied to peasant families forced by circumstance to accumulate debts consisting of borrowed grain.27 These families were cursed by landlords, rich peasants and cadres as "funnels" that could never be filled.28 In the story, Chen Huansheng also has a grain debt which originally began when he procured a wife: at the time of his marriage, his in-laws forgot to send along the girl's grain allowance which was the initial factor launching him into debt. Shortly after, Chen Huansheng is faced with another problem: he discovers that his new wife is ill with encephalitis and is unable to labour in the fields to earn workpoints. The likelihood of paying off his debt diminishes, and, instead, his indebtedness is compounded. A third problem which aggravates the situation stems from the birth of Chen Huansheng's child which occurs in the first month of the year. According to the current regulations, Chen and his family are forced to wait until the following year before they can be awarded their grain allotment for this child.

Things begin to look up in the story when the narrative relates that the hardworking Chen Huansheng may be able to clear his debt by the year 1971 because of the implementation of a new national policy governing quotas. Unfortunately, however, the cadres decide for various reasons not to abide by the new regulation, leaving Chen Huansheng distraught and cynical. Finally, the situation is rectified in 1978 with the fall of the Gang of Four. "Head of a Funnel Household" concludes with Chen Huansheng, staring intently with a sceptical look on his face, as an increasingly large pile of grain is measured out before him. The tears stream down his face.

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27 Decker 113.
"Head of a Funnel Household" is followed by "Chen Huansheng Goes to Town" (Chen Huansheng shang cheng, 陳奐生上城 1980), "Chen Huansheng Changes Occupation" (Chen Huansheng zhuanye, 陳奐生轉業 1983), "Chen Huansheng Makes a Production Contract" (Chen Huansheng baochang, 陳奐生包產 1982) and "Historical Annals Outside the Story" (Shuwai chunqiu, 事外春敘 1982) in which the protagonist has put the "funnel" epithet behind him only to encounter other unimaginable adventures and problems.

In "Chen Huansheng Goes to the City," Huansheng plays the role of the country bumpkin who encounters the sophisticated world of the urban centre. As mentioned above, the goal of economic modernization proclaimed nationally in 1979 resulted in various aspects of village reform, including the emergence of private industry and the opportunity to engage in free market trade. The hero of the story capitalizes on this window of opportunity by making dough fritters (yousheng 油條) in his spare time which he takes into the city to sell for a profit of three yuan. On this particular day, Huansheng also decides to buy a hat as a means of defense against his bouts with the flu which have been increasing recently. He finds one for two and one half yuan which he sets his heart on buying. However, he has brought no extra money with him this day and realizes that the stores will be closed by the time he has sold all his fritters and can finally purchase the hat. By the time evening arrives, Chen Huansheng also discovers that he has fallen victim to yet another bout of the flu, and, disheartened, he collapses on a bench in the railway station where he intends to spend the night. By chance, he is discovered there by Wu Chu, the secretary of the county Party committee with whom Chen Huansheng is acquainted. Wu takes pity on Chen and immediately chauffeurs him in his private car to a guest house.

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29 "Chen Huansheng Goes to Town" is anthologized in Chen Huansheng 40-53; "Chen Huangsheng Changes Occupation" is anthologized in Chen Huansheng 54-89; "Chen Huansheng Makes a Production Contract" is anthologized in Chen Huansheng 90-111; and "Historical Annals Outside the Story" is anthologized in Chen Huansheng 112-123.
where he is able to use his influence to get Huansheng a single, luxurious room. Chen Huansheng awakens the following morning only to discover that his bill of five dollars will deprive him not only of his profits but also of the costs incurred by his previous day's business. Then, his stunned shock turns to pleasure as he fantasizes about how his adventure in town will make him a celebrity back in his home village. Five yuan, he reasons in a Q-like fashion, is a small price to pay for such a "spiritual victory." In the final analysis, it is this character's ingenuousness which accounts for the success of this story. In the words of one critic, the author's treatment of the motivations and attitudes of this peasant is "thoroughly believable" and, far from demeaning the peasant hero, has resulted in a portrait of real people who are motivated more by their own irrational values than ideology in their search for meaning and status.\(^{30}\)

On his return to his village, Chen Huansheng does indeed acquire great status because of his encounter with Secretary Wu. In the next story of the series, "Chen Huansheng Changes Occupation," this status is exploited to full advantage by the brigade cadres and the head of the new factory which is badly in need of scarce materials. When these cadres learn of Chen Huansheng's encounter with Secretary Wu, they press him to enlist Wu's aid in procuring materials for the factory. In other words, they want Chen Huansheng to become their purchasing agent. Chen Huansheng is a little uneasy about his assignment; nonetheless, he sets off, equipped with a bag of sweet potatoes and a hen as gifts, to find Secretary Wu. To his surprise, he is successful and returns home to report his good news. This simple, honest peasant is rewarded with six hundred yuan by his brigade for his troubles, but at this point he begins to entertain doubts about what he has done. In fact, in the next story, "Chen Huansheng Makes a Production Contract," he undertakes the long and arduous return trip back to agricultural production. Meanwhile,

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the family contract responsibility system has just been set in place. Under this system, each family is assigned a plot of land and is held responsible for meeting a grain quota; the surplus amount is kept by the family. Chen Huansheng doubts that he can acquire the skills needed in order to survive under this system; at the same time, the cadres and the factory head who have profited from his connections firmly reject his wish to step down from his position in the factory. In a chance meeting with a cousin, Chen Huansheng becomes aware of the fact that he has been used by the cadres, and he is overcome by shame and mortification. Consequently, he is determined to set up a production contract.

The last story in the series, "Historical Annals Outside the Story," does not deal further with Chen Huansheng and his exploits. Instead, this story consists of a parody and satiric refutation of the events and the characters which are involved in the Chen Huansheng series. This piece is a comment on the narrative process and is one of the first examples of Chinese metafiction. In this story, Chen Huansheng takes on material form, and, with a bellyful of requests and beefs, he sets out to find Gao Xiaosheng, a writer with the same name as the real author who also happens to be closely acquainted with a peasant called Chen Huansheng. This theme is reminiscent of "Six Characters in Search of an Author" by the Italian writer Pirandello in which the characters also come to life. One of Chen Huansheng's requests is rooted in his fear that the author's inclusion of the business of his selling dough fritters in the story might be used against him in some future campaign against capitalist tendencies. He is also resentful of the unflattering image given him in the text. Ultimately, Chen Huansheng fails to meet with Gao Xiaosheng, but when the latter hears of the purpose of his visit, he is prompted to write to Gao Xiaosheng who is the author of the Chen Huansheng series and the narrator of this tale and to suggest that they both give up their names. The first Gao also gives the second Gao a tongue-in-cheek scolding for writing critical portraits of people who subsequently give him trouble. Most
critics accept the narrator's assertion that this work is, indeed, "outside the story" and unrelated to the Chen Huansheng series.31

As mentioned above, after 1983 Gao Xiaosheng's peasant stories are more directly concerned with village reform. "Muddy Feet" (Ni jiao, 污脚1983), for example, concerns the first phase of the village cottage industry; "Bees and Flowers" (Feng hua, 蜂花1983) is about a young man called Miao Guocheng and his various attempts to raise bees; "The Willow Branches on the Bank of the Desolate Pond are Green" (Huang chi anbian liuzhi qing, 荒池岸邊柳枝青1984) gives a picture of the new village life after reform; and "An Extremely Complicated Story" (Ji qi mafan de gushi, 极其麻烦的事1984)32 is about the bizarre events surrounding the attempts by a couple of peasants to establish their own travel service. The peasants in these stories are mostly of the "master-type," and they all encounter difficulties in one form or another stemming from the "obscurantist leftist line." Only when this line is removed and China's social and economic conditions are more favourable, Gao Xiaosheng implies, will the "master-type" of peasant be able to realize a more ideal life. Whether or not this ideal can be achieved under the socialist system is, however, a debatable point.

In conclusion, the successive development of Gao's fiction from 1979 to 1983 reflects the successive changes in Chinese socialism from the period of collectivization to the post-1979 period of political and economic reforms. Accordingly, Gao's fiction also undergoes a successive change in narrative tone from the bitter satire of "Li Shunda Builds a House" and the gentle irony of the Chen Huansheng series to the mimetic realism of his post-1983 peasant fiction. In short, this change in tone implies a gradual curb in the

31 Decker 126.

32 "Muddy Feet" is anthologized in Gao Xiaosheng 1982 xiaoshuoji (Sichuan: Renmin chubanshe, 1983): 109-139; I am unable to locate where "Bees and Flowers" is anthologized; "The Willow Branches on the Bank of the Desolate Pond are Green" is anthologized in Gao Xiaosheng 1982 xiaoshuoji 61-135; "An Extremely Complicated Story" is anthologized in Gao Xiaosheng 1982 xiaoshuoji 149-200.
battery of satiric barbs loosed against the Chinese Communist Party as the Party's reforms meet with a greater degree of this satirist's critical approval. In all its variant literary forms, Gao Xiaosheng's fiction focuses on one things: the livelihood of the peasants whose interests this writer has exclusively at heart and the abilities of the peasants to better their lives once the system, whatever system this may be, adjusts to fit their needs. In this respect he is like Zhao Shuli, except that the latter writer was denied the freedom to say this.

Shi Tiesheng

Shi Tiesheng is a member of the Cultural Revolution generation. As a writer, much of his fiction is based on his experiences of rustification during these tumultuous years. Like the works of Zhong Acheng, Liang Shaosheng and Wang Anyi, they thus fall into the category of "educated youth literature" (zhiqing wenxue 智青文學). Shi Tiesheng is a native of Beijing, and when he graduated from high school in 1967, he was sent to the countryside in Shaanxi Province to do manual labour on a rural commune. While he was there, Shi contracted a rare disease which subsequently left him confined to a wheelchair. After Shi Tiesheng returned to Beijing, he worked in a factory prior to taking up fiction-writing.

It is clear from Shi Tiesheng's fiction that while he was in the countryside he developed a special relationship with Chinese rural life. Instead of being repelled by the countryside, as one might expect from an educated urbanite, he developed an attitude of tolerance, a sense of appreciation and even of identification. This attitude is projected into Shi's most famous work, "My Faraway Qingpingwan" (Wode yaoyuan de Qingpingwan, 我的遠遠的青平溝 1983) which is based on his experiences in rural Shaanxi and,

33 Anthologized in XX, 2: 491-507.
more specifically, on his understanding and knowledge of the peasants and peasant life in the rural commune of Qingpingwan. More importantly, however, this story examines by way of an empathetic narrator the nativist culture of Shaanbei and certain dimensions of Chinese traditional culture; thus, it also belongs to the xungen school of literature.

"My Faraway Qingpingwan" is narrated by an "I"-narrator who has gone to labour on a rural commune in the village of Qingpingwan. Life is very harsh for the Shaanbei peasants living on the northern loess plains, and their livelihood depends primarily on raising cattle. For the two years that he is there, the narrator is given the job of herding cattle in the midst of the rugged northern landscape, and, as he does so, he recounts the various aspects of Shaanbei's nativist culture: the local traditions, the outmoded methods of production and the folksongs through which the local people express their hopes, yearnings and disappointments. Some of the narration is in dialogic form which takes place between the "I"-narrator and a second herder, an ex-soldier from Suide by the name of Old Bai (Po Laohan). This ex-soldier is the quintessential northern Chinese peasant, though his traits of fatalism and his tendency to abide by the old traditions are typical of Chinese peasants anywhere. Besides the symbolism of Old Bai, there are two other symbolic aspects in "My Faraway Qingpingwan": the first is the black bull who possesses a totemic-like significance representing the harsh northern culture, and the second is the morningstar lily which is the story's only reference to politics. This lily symbolizes the improving material life of the peasant and reflects the developing tide of political and economic reforms implemented in 1979.

"My Faraway Qingpingwan" is written in a lyrical, essay-like style. It has no plot and no discernible allegorical meaning. In the words of the author, it narrates the "fragmented, commonplace" bits of life which comprise the lives of most people.34 The significance of "My Faraway Qingpingwan" lies in its urbanized "I"-

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narrator whose commentary on the ancient Shaanbei life amounts to a commentary on the rural, traditional part of Chinese culture and life which have long since vanished from the urban mentality. He is an unobtrusive narrator, and this reflects his validation of his surroundings and his desire to take a part of them back with him when he returns to urban life. In short, his sojourn in Qingpingwan has brought him to the roots of Chinese culture.

Ten years pass in the story during which the narrator has returned to Beijing where he has been living. Old Bai's daughter, Liuxiao'er, visits him, and these roots are temporarily retrieved into conscious memory. The "I"-narrator is overcome by nostalgia which, in his case, is not for a rural home because he lived in Qingpingwan for a mere two years; instead, it is for a bygone life and culture which has faded and will fall completely away from the collective memory as the nation increasingly modernizes. For the time being, through the agent of the educated youth topic, this life and culture has been temporarily retrieved, and in this story it is given a lasting validation.

Shi Tiesheng's "Blacky" (1985), on the other hand, is different in both conception and tone from "My Faraway Qingpingwan." This story stems from the desire to exorcise the pernicious and ongoing effects of the Cultural Revolution which are the characteristics of "educated youth" literature and which are also foregrounded in this story. The first of these is the "I"-narrator who was branded a Rightist during the Cultural Revolution. At the time that this happened, his wife left him, taking their children with her. Distraught, empty and contemplating suicide, the narrator decides to return to his old home, from which he has been separated for many years, in order to take one last look. When he arrives, he discovers that his family cave dwelling was given to one Zhang Shan upon the death of his father; later, during the Cultural Revolution, Zhang Shan was taken

35 "Blacky (Heihei) is anthologized in Shi Tiesheng, Wo de yaoyuan de Qingpingwan (Beijing: Shiyue wenyi chubanshe, 1985): 71-89.
away and killed. Only his loyal dog, Blacky, was left behind to stand guard over the family home. The remainder of the narrative is given over exclusively to Blacky whose allegorical significance takes place on the level of symbolism and provides the meaning of the story. Her horrible privation symbolizes that of the Chinese people under the mistaken economic policies of the Communist regime; her loyalty to the "sacred altar" and "idols" of her home symbolizes the loyalty to socialism on the part of the people and those like Zhang Shan; finally, her miserable death at the hands of the vengeful villagers symbolizes the reward bestowed by the Chinese Communist Party on those who embrace this loyalty. Her death also symbolizes the autocratic and ruthless power that the Party takes on for itself and the arbitrary execution of this power. The allegory in "Blacky" concludes by stating that the "dark age" described in the narrative is over but that in order to truly defeat it "we must first recognize it."^{36}

In sum, Shi Tiesheng's fiction is structured at the level of allegory and symbolism to make certain statements about rural life, Chinese tradition and the Chinese Communist Party. As a xungen writer, he positively affirms the value that traditional culture has for modern life, but at the same time, he implies that this culture must be nurtured. This, in short, is not what the Chinese Communist Party is doing. Nonetheless, this writer is both hopeful and optimistic; once things change for the better, he implies, rural life will be enhanced and can contribute positively to China's search for modernity.

Han Shaogong

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^{36} Shi Tiesheng 6.
Han Shaogong is another *xungen* writer. Of all these writers, Han's style is perhaps the most innovative and modern, and the thought and conception behind his works are also the most brilliant and philosophical. The most striking feature of Han Shaogong's work is the use of abnormal psychological states such as dreams, confusion and derangement in his description of persons and events, not to mention the disruption of the time-space order in his narratives. These are modernist techniques reminiscent of Latin American magic realism which tend to "defamiliarize"\textsuperscript{37} the reader and make him or her re-think their conceptions about Chinese culture. As a result, Han Shaogong's works are among the most challenging and difficult to understand of all current fictional interpretations of China's search for modernity.

The philosophical basis of Han Shaogong's fiction lies in his criticism of Chinese traditional culture which is linked with the denial or acceptance of historical reality. Han's criticism is the most problematic of all the *xungen* writers and is accompanied by certain contradictions or ambiguities regarding his evaluation of Chinese tradition and Chinese traditional and modern values. These ambiguities are heightened by the epistemological uncertainty in Han's fiction about the future of Chinese culture. This is the case, for instance, in "Bababa" (Bababa, 1985), Han's harshest critique, whose conclusion implies the circular and repetitive historical non-development of traditional Chinese culture.\textsuperscript{38} In "Return" (Guiqulai, 1985),\textsuperscript{39} there is also the problematical

\textsuperscript{37} "Defamiliarization" is a technique devised by the Russian formalists where the intent is to make familiar aspects of reality seem strange. In Han's case, he wished to affect a critical attitude on the part of his readers and to compel them to rethink familiar notions about Chinese culture. Han hoped that this would ultimately lead to the "healing of the ailing [Chinese] body." (Han Shaogong, "Xunzhao dongfang wenhua de siwei he shenmei yushi," *Wenxue yuebao*, 6 [1986], quoted in Hu Zongjian, "Han Shaogong jinzuo sansi," *Wenxuepinsulin*, 2 [1987]:56.)


Duke, "Reinventing China" 41.

position in the narrative of the urbanized narrator. This narrator is forced to contend with
the various problems and difficulties which arise from his attempts to recover in traditional
culture something which has been lost from the Chinese urban consciousness. The story
concludes with this retrieval; however, what he finds is almost too much for him. My
discussion of Han Shaogong's works focuses on these various points.

In April, 1986, Han Shaogong published an article which subsequently became the
manifesto of the xungen movement. In this article, he argued that the past culture and
literature of China must be plumbed as sources of cultural concepts and styles for writers;
otherwise, writers would fall prey to the latest trends from the West. For Han
Shaogong, his personal source of inspiration lay in the ancient culture of Chu located in the
heart of West Hunan. More particularly, Han viewed Chu culture as a regional culture,
one that was anthropologically defined as the religious beliefs, mores, songs and legends,
material culture and the ancient Chu ethos. This concept of the culture of Chu echoes
that found in the work of Shen Congwen, but in contrast to Shen, Han Shaogong put little
faith in Shen Congwen's beautiful and positive myth which the latter used as the agent for
his criticism of Confucianism. On the contrary, a year after he published his manifesto,
Han Shaogong elevated the concept of a regional culture into a negative national construct.
He used this construct as an image for the whole of China and for his wish for the eventual
reconstruction of a transnational "Eastern culture." Within this reconstruction Han hoped

40 Han Shaogong, "Wenxue de 'gen,'" Zuojia (1985): 2-5.

Han maintained in this manifesto that searching for roots had nothing to do with Kang Youwei's concept of the "national essence" (guocui).

41 Jeffrey Kinkley, "Shen Congwen and the Romance of Chu Culture: Their Legacy in Chinese Literature of the 1980s" 42.

42 Han Shaogong was born in Changsha. Han's connection with West Hunan was through his parents who are both from West Hunan and from a trip he made to West Hunan in 1985-86. Han's rustication took place in Changle in the eastern part of the province.

43 Kinkley 42.
to find the superiority of this culture and a signpost to guide him on his own personal quest for the roots of Chinese culture.\textsuperscript{44} Han Shaogong's concept of an elusive future ideal, however, is tautological and casts a shadow on the philosophical basis of his thought. In short, the future of Chinese culture in his work remains uncertain.

The criticism of Chinese culture in Han Shaogong's fiction comes hard on the heels of three decades of Maoism in China. However, Maoism, the Chinese Communist Party and their myth-making properties are virtually eliminated in the body of his works, signifying that politics and ideology are of relatively less importance in Han's inquiry into modern society. In the majority of the xungen fiction, culture is reestablished both as the fundamental bond uniting Chinese society and also as the cause of the illnesses of this society; it has also been reestablished as the key link in the future development of the nation. In contrast to Lu Xun, however, Han's inquiry into the nature of traditional culture reveals a bifurcation in the mind of this author which is ambiguous, though one which is certainly not lacking in the works of other writers of xiangtu wenxue. One Chinese critic posits that Han Shaogong evinces a mentality of "embracing the old."\textsuperscript{45} If this is true, the presence of this concept would also account, in part, for the contradictions in his work.

Han's bifurcation can be seen in two of his more representative stories. In "Return," for instance, the narrator evinces strong, positive feelings for traditional culture which, as is typical of xiangtu wenxue, is conflated with the Chinese village. The village in this story is depicted as poor yet structured around a tightly-bound "primitive" community which is tied together by strong bonds of compassion, altruism and friendship. These bonds are extended to Huang Zhixian in the story who is showered with good will and hospitality when he makes a return visit to the village. In short, China's cultural roots in this story are given a strong, positive evaluation. "Bababa," on the other hand, is Han

\textsuperscript{44} Hu Zongjian 49, 59.

\textsuperscript{45} Wu Liang, "Han Shaogong de lixing fanchou," Zuojia, 7 (1987): 73-74.
Shaogong’s condemnation of China’s traditional culture. This story is an allegory of the most egregious aspects of Chinese culture which are condemned not only through the village idiot, Bingzai, who represents the Chinese national character but also through the many superstitions, the shaman culture, village sadism and the village’s non-developmental aspects which constitute the daily fabric of life. In sum, these two stories represent two opposing assessments of Chinese traditional culture.

A second area of ambivalence in Han’s fiction can be traced to his negative assessment of both the traditional and modern values of China. This assessment is linked to his concept of a negative national construct discussed above which stems from Han’s conceptions of Chinese culture as an instinctual, "primitive" mode of existence or as a nightmare filled with superstitions, ignorance and strict obedience to elders and ancestors. The villagers of Jitouzhai (Chicken Head Stockade) in "Bababa," for instance, are immersed in the nightmare of their distant, historical past. Their bondage is reinforced both by their religious beliefs and by their belief in certain erroneous concepts handed down from their ancestors. This instinctual, "primitive" mode of existence, however, has not been totally superseded by modern life, at least according to Han. On the contrary, remnants of ignorance and darkness from this ancient, primitive life can also be found in the modern mind and values. A second critic maintains that there is a sociological basis for this continuum which derives from the preservation of the traditions of the farming village in the mind and practices of the urban folk. In his words, the entire nation thus has the nature of a "rural society" (literally, "nativist society") (xiangtu shehui 鄉土社會). This "nativization," if Han Shaogong does indeed partake of this concept, would account for his ambivalent assessment of both traditional and modern values. This second area of ambivalence is established through Han Shaogong’s characterization.

46 Kinkley 43.

The characters in Han Shaogong's fiction tend to be of two types: those who represent traditional values and those who represent modern. Both categories of characterization, however, are composed of a range of generally abnormal types. Bingzai, for instance, represents the "idiocy of popular traditional values"—he is repulsive to look at, he dribbles saliva, and he is the target of sadistic treatment. The character Zhong Man in the same story is also of this type and is given a similarly negative assessment. Zhong Man is the supreme representative of Jitouzhai's ancestral traditions and culture; thus, he is endowed with an elitist status in the village. At the same time, this village patriarch is a slave to the ancestors and to his own sense of filiality which makes him the agent for the unending cycle of village misery, pain and ignorance. Convinced that the Dao has been defeated and that Jitouzhai will be destroyed in a feud, Zhong Man attempts suicide by impaling himself on a wooden stake. To his way of thinking, this act is an expression of his filiality which will subsequently be recorded in clan records. Apparently, he is not averse to inflicting pain on himself and on the others who follow his example. Zhong Man is also the perpetrator of an ancient Jamestown-like poison cult (gu) whereby all the old and weak in the village are killed off. Through the deaths of these villagers, he incidentally provides a retinue for himself when he eventually goes to the grave.

Zhong Man's son, Shi Ren, on the other hand, is a representative of more modern values. The portrait of this character, however, is also generally negative. Shi Ren is equipped with a certain amount of new thought which he has acquired from his trips outside the village to the world beyond. His knowledge of this thought, however, is superficial and is contaminated by fantasy. Shi Ren's reformist urges are concentrated on events or objects of no practical value, such as his voyeuristic preoccupation with watching

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48 Duke 41-42.

49 The practice during the Shang period of kings being accompanied to the grave by a live retinue is recorded in the Mengzi. The practice of the live retinue was superceded in later periods by the manufacture of clay images accompanying the royal interment.
women bathe or with the activities of female animals. From the outside world he brings back things of little use, such as "novel toys, a glass bottle, a broken lantern, a rubber band, an old newspaper, and a small photograph of some unknown image." These objects, like the coke bottle discovered in the desert sand by the Pygmy in the movie "The Gods Must be Crazy," inspire wonderment, but they are ultimately ineffectual in promoting village change. Like his father, Shi Ren is also an agent for ongoing village destruction and pain. Inspired by his father's filiality, Shi Ren calls for the escalation of village feuding which ends in terrible bloodshed. If Jitouzhai is victorious, so he reasons, the nation and the spirits of the ancestors would both be appeased. The positive qualities of this character are thus overshadowed by destructive, selfish impulses. A second modern character, Lao Hei in "Three Women" (Nü nü nü, 女女女 1985) is also a representative of modern values and, in this case, the new, modern woman. The portrait of this character, however, is also problematical: she smokes cigarettes, has questionable sexual morals and succumbs to a paralyzing mid-life crisis when her looks and attractiveness fade. This portrait is inspired by Chinese misogyny; nonetheless, Lao Hei, like Shi Ren, reflects Han's problematical assessment of modern Chinese values.

Finally, the urbanized narrator in "Return" can also be considered as a factor in Han's ambivalence. Like other writers of xiangtu wenxue, Han is an urbanized intellectual attempting to make sense of the onslaught of confusion and tensions emanating from the tradition-modernity crisis. This crisis is all the more egregious because it emerged in the wake of a three-decade period in which Maoism was supposed to supply all the answers. Han and other Chinese intellectuals were led to ask not only fundamental questions such

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50 Han Shaogong, 166.
51 Anthologized in Youhuo: 200-268.
as: How to resolve the tensions between Chinese traditional and modern values? And, what are the roots of Chinese culture? They were also led to ask questions such as: What is the extent to which traditional culture should be integrated into the modern life and mind? Which aspects of traditional culture are already part of the national and individual character, and do they account for contemporary social problems and malaise? If so, how do they account for these problems? Han Shaogong and other xungen writers are young, educated urbanites; thus these questions have particular relevance for them. This relevance stems not merely from the Western challenge in the urban centres in the decade of the 1980s but also from the necessity and the difficulty of resolving these questions on the level of the individual psyche. These are not abstract questions; on the contrary, they concern the rediscovery in traditional culture of something vital which has been lost from the Chinese urban consciousness.

To turn to Han Shaogong's stories, "Return" is narrated by a traumatized urban "I"-narrator who returns to the village where he was "sent down" ten years previously. This return is related as a dream sequence and is accompanied by vertigo, dissociation and symbolism which are conveyed through modernistic techniques reminiscent of magic realism. The "I"-narrator, known to himself as Huang Zhixian, is addressed repeatedly by the villagers as Ma Yanjing (Glasses Ma). Over and over, Huang denies to one and all that he has ever been to the village, yet at the same time he is continuously teased by feelings of unease and by a sense of *deja vu*. At first, he responds to the villagers by humouring them, then almost imperceptibly, this game takes on a life of its own: another consciousness emerges. This consciousness is privy to the past and to the knowledge possessed by the Ma identity who was intimately involved in the events of ten years ago, including a murder and a love affair. In short, it is clear that the Huang and Ma identities have merged.
The epiphany in which this merging takes place occurs that night when the protagonist is sitting in a hot, steamy bath. The protagonist suffers temporary dissociation from his body—the kind associated with trauma—and becomes aware of the "real me." He taps into his personal, ancestral history and, metaphorically, a larger cultural history whose pain he had previously denied. The protagonist's crisis is temporarily over, and he is now able to carry on in the Ma identity. He has a conversation with a deceased old peasant; he also encounters Fourth Sister whose older sister he acknowledges loving and abandoning. This older sister has turned into a parrot which admonishes him from a tree, and he vows to take the parrot back with him. He also promises to assist Fourth Sister in her studies. Eventually, the Huang-Ma protagonist escapes from the village of his past and beds down in a room at an inn. He telephones a friend, and in the course of the conversation, this friend acknowledges his identity as Huang Zhixian. Once again the protagonist is overwhelmed by the traumatic effects brought on by dissociation. The knowledge which he has acquired about himself, about past historical events and about the roots of Chinese tradition is too much for him, and, too late at this point, he half-desires to relinquish it. The story ends with his complaint, "I am tired. I can never leave this immense being which is me." His mystical, wandering quest is over; nonetheless, the burden of the "me" which he is forced to shoulder will, the reader assumes, take him on a new psychological and cultural quest which will endow his life with greater meaning. In the ultimate analysis, Huang has arrived at a greater understanding of himself only because he has acknowledged and accepted the facts of his own and the nation's cultural and historical past.

52 The motif of the hot, steamy bath accompanied by an epiphany also occur in "Three Women." In this case, the female character, Yao Gu, undergoes a devolution into an animal form after emerging from the bath.

53 Jeffrey Kinkley points out that that the parrot in the story evokes the bird motif of the ancient chu culture recorded in the Chu ci. (Kinkley 47.)

"Bababa," on the other hand, is different from "Return" and represents a complete reversal of the haunting and beautiful myth of the ancient Chu culture. In brief, this narrative is a nightmarish ethnography and a horrifying allegory of the fossilized, most backward aspects of Chinese traditional culture. Jitouzhai, around which the work centres, is a primitive, communalized village society in the high mountains of Xiangxi. This village is held together by bonds of clan authority and the dictates of shamans and elders. Jitouzhai is poor and backward, primarily because of its isolation but also because of the inclement climate and perennially poor harvests. The decision is taken by the elders in the village to blast Jitou Feng, the mountain behind the village, and this leads to a resurgence of the blood feud with the neighbouring village of Jiweizhai (Chicken Tail Stockade). Jitouzhai is defeated in the feud, and the young men and women of the village clan escape by crossing the mountains, symbolizing the cyclical non-nondevelopment of traditional Chinese culture.

Much of "Bababa" comprises an ethnographic account of local beliefs in animism, deity worship and superstitions. The villagers explain their perennially poor harvests through their belief in a chicken spirit which eats the grain in the fields. They also believe that it is only through the presence of this chicken spirit's excrement that the fields remain fertile. Omens and taboos are also explained by way of a host of superstitious cause-and-effect beliefs. For example, the villagers believe that drinking the blood of a white ox can dispel the effects of poison. A second belief, one which has been passed down to contemporary Chinese society, is that red paper can act as a talisman to ward off evil. Even Bingzai's birth is explained in this way: Bingzai's mother accidently killed a green-eyed, red-bodied spider while she was pregnant which resulted in her baby's son's congenital retardation.55 These beliefs evoke a primitive, instinctive society, one

55 This is probably Down's Syndrome.
representative not only of the regional culture of West Hunan, but also of the whole of Chinese culture.

Besides superstitions, the inhabitants of Jitouzhai are also at the mercy of a shaman culture and their belief in deities, ancestors and elders, all of which exercise considerable power over them. The shamans direct the blasting of Jitou Feng and the decapitation of an ox which, they believe, can predict the outcome of the battle. This shaman culture also leads to the villagers' deification of Bingzai: to them, his moronic recitation of "bababa" is a sign that Bingzai is a transcendent (xian 仙). The deities also come into the picture when, in the mind of the villagers, the sacrifice of Bingzai can circumvent the rot on the seedlings. At the last minute, a crash of thunder is heard which is interpreted as the wrath of Heaven, and Bingzai is spared. The villagers are not only slaves to shamans and deities, they also blindly engage in ancestor worship. In this respect, Bingzai's chanting of "bababa" is symbolic of the villagers' blind obedience to the ancestors and to the dictates of Chinese tradition. The villagers' compulsion to obey this tradition ultimately leads to the concocting of the poisonous, death-inducing broth by the village elder, Zhong Man. The elder feeds this broth unresistingly to the older and weaker among the village population in the wake of Jitouzhai's defeat. This last horrifying detail, the communal eating of enemy flesh, the enforced suicides and pointless sacrifice and feuding, all combine to present a picture far removed from the utopian myth of the ancient Chu culture. They are symptoms, instead, of a severe dystopian reality which has continued in some form in contemporary Chinese life.

In conclusion, there are two main themes of "Bababa." The first is centred around the character of Bingzai and his hideous appearance, his child's intelligence and his bizarre behaviour such as playing with birdshit, all of which engender abuse from others. This character is a throw-back to a distant ancestry or antiquity, a motif which is symbolized by his incessant chanting of "bababa." Bingzai's survival of the poison cult near the
conclusion of the story reflects his life-form as only half human; it also symbolizes the ignorance and misery of the Chinese people which relentlessly continue from one generation to the next.

A second theme of "Bababa" concerns the cultural matrix surrounding and suffocating the villagers of Jitouzhai and entrapping them in an ignorant and primordial state reminiscent of Lu Xun's iron house. One element of this matrix is nativist and comprises the force behind old customs, old ways of thinking and an old philosophy which makes the villagers stagnate and drives them toward defeat. A second element in this cultural matrix is the villagers' denial of their past history. The villagers lack knowledge about the real nature of their origins which were mythologized long ago, and, accordingly, they are led to beautify their ancestors who actually experienced a grim history very different from that recorded in their chants. As a consequence, when the villagers abandon their village, their song is about flowers and has no mention of blood. This symbolizes their repression of hardship and suffering and their willingness to reexperience suffering. In sum, the denial of history on the part of the villagers serves to preserve their ignorance intact and allows them to avoid reality; this is the key factor in the villagers' repetitive cultural non-development.

Mo Yan

Mo Yan, another xungen writer, is best known for his experimentation with modernist forms and techniques, especially the magic realism reminiscent of Latin American literature. Mo Yan conveys a number of things through these forms such as the disorder and malaise of contemporary Chinese society and the oppressive nature of the rural society and culture of Shandong Province. More importantly, however, Mo Yan uses these techniques to convey his own subjectivity which is a unique quality not found in the works of other xungen writers. In
brief, Mo Yan's subjectivity consists in the projection onto his narratives of his personal experiences and his complex emotional life which are rooted in his childhood memories. The confusion and pain in Mo Yan's fiction are all products of his relentless reexamination and retrieval of his childhood, and many of these memories are of violence, abuse and loneliness. Mo Yan's subjectivity is the reason that many critics maintain that this writer uses the external world to describe his internal feelings. The nature of this subjectivity allows the reader an understanding of Mo Yan's inner world and psyche; accordingly, one can also gain a greater understanding of the national psyche of the Chinese people which is so often assumed or mechanically reproduced in fiction.

Like other writers of xiangtu wenxue, Mo Yan locates the world of his childhood deep within China's rural world. Mo Yan journeyed from his impoverished farming village in Gaomi, Shandong Province, to the political and cultural centre of Beijing. In the city, however, he experienced repression, conflict and anxiety which ultimately drew him back to the past life of China's farming villages. Mo Yan's rural world is less shocking than that of Han Shaogong; nonetheless, this world is also cruel, senseless, and irremediable. It is also characterized by broken dreams, oppression and violence, which are testimony that the landscape of peasant existence continues unchanged as the focal point for the bitter dynamics of Chinese culture and politics. It is a world in which the dynamics of human misery, more often than not, are also exacerbated by the unfeeling attitudes of rural Communist Party cadres. In sum, Mo Yan reexamines the rural society of his birthplace and the pain of his childhood within the shadows of the rural world; this constitutes the underlying narrative structure of "Crystal Carrot" (Touming de hongluobo, 透明的紅蘿蔔 1984) and "Dry River" (Ku he, 乾河 1985).


57 Mo Yan was raised in a family classified as "upper middle peasant." During the Cultural Revolution, he returned to his village home where he tended cattle and worked as a part-time labourer in a linseed-oil factory, an experience which reinforced his knowledge and understanding of peasant life.

58 "Crystal Carrot" is anthologized in Touming de hongluobo (Beijing: zuojia chubanshe, 19886): 136-201; "Dry River" is anthologized in the same collection: 213-229.
Mo Yan's rural home is located in Gaomi, Shandong. This is an impoverished rural village, and as Mo Yan grew up in this village, he learned all the elements of China's farming life. He also internalized the nativist culture of his home province, much of which he despised, and which he uses as the backdrop for his fiction. Shandong is traditionally the cradle of Chinese Confucianism and is governed by clan ties and the bonds of kinship ethics summed up in the Chinese term "lijiao". The geophysical aspects of this area historically lent themselves to battles, and, during the War of Resistance against Japan, Shandong served as the locus for the people's struggle against imperialism. When Mo Yan was a young child, his village also suffered the dire agrarian policies of the Chinese Communist Party. China's economy experienced severe stagnation as a result of the Great Leap Forward, and the farming villages, in particular, suffered during these years. These conditions exacerbated the existing poverty and "feudal" privilege of Mo Yan's native region and tended to mold the almost nihilistic outlook of this writer. One critic maintains that the artistic achievement of Mo Yan's fiction and his tendency to throw aside the burden of rationalism are the unique products of this cultural and historical background.

For Mo Yan, one tangible result of the historically regressive aspects of this period of Chinese history is his search among his grandparents' generation for ideals of character and heroism. Red Sorghum (Hong gaoliang, 1987), for instance, is historically located in the time of his grandparents and is filled with scenes of heroism and sacrifice undertaken during the War of Resistance against Japan. These scenes render his grandparents into a generation of national folk heroes who, driven by a primitive vitality, are hard-working, strong, passionate and courageous. This generation is also depicted in Mo Yan's fiction as struggling against China's traditional standards and the hypocrisy of Confucian culture. The generation of the narrator's

"Dry River" is about a young boy who commits suicide after being violently beaten by each member of his family. The family tensions in the story are aggravated by its ranking by the Chinese Communist Party as upper-middle class peasants.

59 Ji Hongzhen 23.

60 Anthologized in Touming de hongluobo, Mo Yan juan 191-282.
parents, on the other hand, stands in stark contrast to this generation. This later generation
personifies weakness, ignorance and conservatism, characteristics which are also found in the
enervated, corrupted urbanite who appears as the returned, urbanized narrator near the conclusion
of *Red Sorghum*. This narrator, who has an "urbanized and foul-smelling" body reappears in his
rural village after an absence of nearly ten years.\(^6^1\) He visits his grandmother's grave where he
has a vision of this woman admonishing him to purge himself in the Black River in order to
cleanse himself of the modern urban filth clinging to his body.\(^6^2\) This narrator belongs to the
third generation which is caught in between the other two and suffers tremendously. In sum,
Chinese generational ties and the bonds of kinship ethics constitute a kind of "psychological time"
心理時間\(^6^3\) in Mo Yan's fiction which persists from the past into the contemporary Chinese
consciousness of today. This concept echoes the idea of the "rural society" discussed earlier in
connection with Han Shaogong's fiction which accounts for the interweaving of Chinese nativist
culture in contemporary thought and life.

Mo Yan's "Crystal Carrot" is an exemplary instance of the fictional subjectivity of
this writer. This subjective element is combined in the story with the narration of the
primitive, harsh and emotionally-explosive conditions of life in a rural construction team
during the time of the Cultural Revolution. The peasants on this team are ground down by
the unreasonable demands of the rural Party cadres and are subjected to a deadening routine

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\(^{61}\) The motif of return in this novella echoes a statement made by Mo Yan in a discussion concerning his short
story "Red Locusts" (Hong huang, 1987). Mo Yan stated that as he found friendship to be rare in the city, he
returned to the "imagination of my grandfather's generation." (Mo Yan, "Zai chuanshuo zhong," (publ. info
not given), quoted from Duke, "Paradise County: Mo Yan's Tian tang suan tai zi ge (1988) and its May
Fourth Predecessors," UBC draft ms: 17.)

\(^{62}\) The return to the rural village in "Red Sorghum" is conflated with a return to an idealized past, tainted with
nostalgia, and contains the shadow of a forgotten, transcendent China. This China, the text implies, exists
spatially in the sanctity of rural life; thus, in order to seek it, one must throw off all the corrupting effects of
the urban, modernized world. As an idealized world, this world has also happily lost its "feudal" connotations
which are usually part and parcel of the Chinese rural context. Temporally, on the other hand, this
transcendent China, or Chinese culture, dwells in the imaginary world of the grandparents, at least according
to Mo Yan, but its true time-frame is more likely a China that is prior to the West.

\(^{63}\) Ji Hongzhen, "Shenhua shijie de renleixue kongjian: shi Mo Yan xiaoshuo de yuyi cengci," *Beijing wenxue*,
of continuous hard labour. Their lack of an inner world contrasts strongly with the fantasies and dream life of the young boy who comes to be known as Hei Hai (Black Child) in the story. The fantasies of this child symbolize his desire to escape from the harsh realities of his world and China's egregious rural life.

"Crystal Carrot" is based on a dream that Mo Yan once had about a voluptuous young woman dressed in red who, just prior to dawn, entered a carrot patch equipped with a long fish hook. After catching a carrot with her hook, the woman disappeared in the direction of the rising sun. In Mo Yan's words, "[T]he carrot gleamed with an eery light under the rays of the sun, and that mysterious feeling stunned me." 紅蘿蔔在陽光下閃爍着奇異的光彩.那種神祕的情調,使我感到振奮。64 The motif of physical abuse in "Crystal Carrot" is also garnered from personal experience, in this case, a beating the author once sustained as a child after pulling up a carrot while he was labouring in the fields.65 These experiential elements in "Crystal Carrot" are the major sources of the story's expressive subjectivism.

"Crystal Carrot" opens with Hei Hai and Xiao Shijiang (Young Stonemason) who join a production team in a rural worksite. The stonemason and the ten-year old Hei Hai, who is classed as a poor peasant, are transferred to a second site under the supervision of the commune deputy chairman, Liu. This rural Party worker is also referred to as Liu Taiyang who represents the whims and absurdities of Party policies and statements. Liu explains to the team that their mandate consists in widening the locks in a local dike for irrigation purposes. More than two hundred people have been transferred from the commune to complete this project, including two blacksmiths, Lao Tiejiang (Old Blacksmith) and Xiao Tiejiang (Young Blacksmith) who smelt steel into drills for the project. There is also a team of women, one member of which is the female protagonist,

64 Quoted in Chen Xinyuan 8.
65 Ibid.
Juzi (Chrysanthemum). These women are assigned the task of pounding rocks into gravel and, initially, Hei Hai is also assigned to this team. Eventually, Hei Hai is transferred to the blacksmiths' site where he assists the blacksmiths in pumping the bellows for their fire. There, he is constantly ridiculed, abused and tormented by Xiao Tiejiang because he is small and weak. At one point he is even instructed to pick up a burning-hot defective drill which he does so with his bare hands. Thenceforth at night he is plagued with the memory of his burning hands until he finally drops off to sleep. The abuse this child suffers and his repression and psychological numbness result in his rich fantasy life which leads to his vision of a crystal carrot. The image of the carrot lies at the heart of the philosophical meaning of the story.

Other themes in "Crystal Carrot" involve the human kindness of Juzi who takes Hei Hai under her wing and the love relationship that develops between her and Xiao Shijiang. This couple subsequently abandon their young friend and give themselves over to the pursuit of their passion. This love relationship aggravates Xiao Tiejiang whose bitter rage, frustration and jealousy symbolize the disorder and agonies of the Cultural Revolution. Xiao Tiejiang becomes even more abusive of Hei Hai but, ironically, the young blacksmith eventually supercedes the aging artisan blacksmith whose culture, patience and good will represent the bygone potential of the Chinese people and nation now superannuated. Eventually, Xiao Tiejiang and Xiao Shijiang engage in a fistfight. This fight turns into a gravel-throwing match during which Juzi loses an eye to a large stone. The couple disappear, Xiao Tiejiang turns to drink and the story slowly draws to a close.

"Crystal Carrot" is an account of the moral bankruptcy, violence and aberrance of the adult world as seen through the eyes of a child. It is also an account of narratorial anger and disaffection with this world. The coldness of this world is reinforced by the cold

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66 The motif of one blinded eye extends to Xiao Tiejiang in "Crystal Carrot" and is also found in the portrait of the young woman, Nuan, in the story "White Dog and the Swings" (Baigou qiuqian jia, 1985).
weather (Hei Hai is only semi-clad in the story), the cold of the stone balustrades and the
cold autumn wind which blows through the caves of the dyke where the team sleeps at
night. Hei Hai's childhood perspective of this world is conditioned both by the suffering
he experiences on the worksite and from that in his homelife: his father has abandoned him
and his stepmother, neglected and abandoned herself, has turned to alcohol. Her
subsequent physical abuse of Hei Hai is the realization of the author's conceptions of cruel
kinship ties. Hei Hai copes with his vulnerability and anxieties in the only way he knows
how-- by becoming "dysfunctional," that is, by withdrawing in autistic fashion from the
world and becoming mute.67 His retreat into his fantasy world is accompanied by his
strong identification with nature, with the river, its fish and shrimp and with the hemp
fields and the birds in these fields which compensate for the coldness of the human world.
Hei Hai endows nature with a magical function. At one point, for instance, he jumps into
the river to fetch water, climbs the dyke and senses that the willow trees on the top of the
dyke make the little roadway twist and turn. It seems as though a magnet has been attached
to the branches of the willows, and this attracts the iron water buckets, making them
swing. Nature's fantastical qualities are also combined with hallucinatory alterations of the
sensory perceptions described after the manner of magic realism. When Liu Taiyang is
speaking, for instance, a frog bumps into the yellow hemp leaves, making a loud sound.
On another occasion, Juzi brings Hei Hai two northern steamed rolls in one of which a
human hair is imbedded. Juzi disentangles it from the bread and flicks it to the ground.
The sound of falling hair was "very loud, and Hei Hai heard it." 68
These sounds compensate for the silence Hei Hai has imposed on his relations with the
human world. At other places in the text, nature comes into play in the red-green

67 The mute motif reappears in other works by Mo Yan such as the portrait of the mute child, Xiaohu, in "Dry
River" and the mute husband and children of Nuan in "White Dog and the Swings." The motif of the one
blinded eye and the mute motif reinforce the violence and harsh conditions of China's rural life.

68 Mo Yan 166.
chromaticism which Mo Yan is known for, especially in *Red Sorghum*.\(^6^9\) The water of the river, for instance, is made up of "a patch of red and a patch of green" — 塊紅—塊綠,\(^7^0\) a chromaticism which originates in the primitive colours of China's folk arts and also accounts for the brilliant colour of the carrot. To the reader, however, these alterations knock awry our usual sensory expectations; we are thus "defamiliarized" and made to empathize with Hei Hai even more.

Mo Yan's delving into the misty realms of the human spirit has been termed by one critic as a "psychological action model." 心理的行为模式,\(^7^1\) The developmental process of this model begins with an emotional state which is taken to a peak and finally released. This emotional state in "Crystal Carrot" is Hei Hai's loneliness, numb psychological state and quest for meaning and love which are developed and brought to a final resolution through the symbolic imagery of the carrot. This development begins one day when Xiao Tiejiang incites Hei Hai to steal a number of sweet potatoes and carrots from the field of the neighbouring production team. Xiao Tiejiang, Juzi, Xiao Shijiang and Hei Hai wash and prepare the vegetables for baking in the stove. One carrot drops into the coal dust and is set aside on top of the anvil. This carrot subsequently becomes the subject of Hei Hai's beautiful vision which is as follows:

A dark blue light emanated from the glossy anvil. Above this dark blue light floated a gold-coloured carrot. In shape and size it was like a great pear. It trailed a long tail, the fine roots of which were like gold-coloured lambswool. The carrot was crystal, transparent and delicate. Inside, the carrot's transparent, gold-coloured skin nurtured a silver liquid bursting with life. The lines of the carrot were smooth and graceful and emanated gold rays of light, some of

\(^{6^9}\) This red and green chromatism has been artistically reproduced by the Fifth-Generation film-maker, Zhang Yimou, in his filming of this novel.

\(^{7^0}\) Mo Yan 147.

which were long like wheat spikelets, others short like eyelashes. And all were a gold colour...."72

This image has overt phallic implications and, in part, represents Hei Hai's desire to escape his childhood torments through the means of sexual, and thus adult, knowledge. More importantly, however, this vision represents a primal life force or a power which Hei Hai desires to retrieve for himself and through which he can gain empowerment. Personally empowered, Hei Hai could thus do two things: counteract the systemic abuses of the political and social system which ignores his childhood needs and continue his developmental process which, according to the text, terminated at age four or five.

Hei Hai reaches for the carrot in his vision, but, in yet another act of torment, Xiao Tiejiang throws the carrot into the river. The carrot describes a golden arc which Hei Hai follows with his eyes. In anguish, Hei Hai searches for his carrot in the river and returns several more times to the carrot patch to steal more carrots. Finally, he goes one last time to the carrot patch and, one by one, pulls up all the carrots and examines them by the light of the autumn sun-- Hei Hai is searching for his special "crystal carrot," and all it represents. Caught red-handed by the old man who guards the field, Hei Hai is taken to the production team leader who gives him a rough interrogation. He strips him of his clothes and sends him on his way, demanding that his father come and retrieve his belongings. Hei Hai then makes his way back into the field of yellow hemp "like a fish swimming into the big sea."73

Hei Hai's search for and failure to find the means of his empowerment would seem to make this story a tragedy. Within the tradition of Western literature, there is a parallel theme of loss and search-- King Lear's search for and loss of Cordelia, the daughter who was the key to the king's understanding of his flawed personality. Lear's inability to

72 Mo Yan 180.
73 Ibid. 201.
reunite with his daughter and her untimely death ultimately resulted in King Lear's great personal tragedy. Within the tradition of Chinese traditional literature, however, this theme can be interpreted slightly differently. The theme of loss of and search for a powerful talisman is an important structural component of *Story of the Stone*. At the conclusion of this novel, Jia Baoyu came into repossession of his talisman-- his jade stone-- which allowed him to return once more to the Truth or Greensickness Peak --the symbol of the Buddhist Nirvana in the story. Unlike Jia Baoyu, Hei Hai in the "Crystal Carrot" failed to rediscover his talisman, and yet the spirituality of the fish image implies a transformation similar to Baoyu's. Regardless of where he has gone or whether he is alive, Hei Hai has had an encounter with the truth, and this truth is one manifestation of the long roots of Chinese culture. These roots reach back to a source of the deepest spirituality of Chinese culture which has survived many political and dynastic changes and, it would appear, will survive for some time to come. The rediscovery of this spirituality in the decade of the 1980s implies that it is a vital and intrinsic part of China's search for modernity.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the four writers discussed in this chapter are united by one feature which is typical of most of the *xiangtu* writers discussed in this dissertation, and this is their concern for the fate and well-being of the mass of China's peasants. This concern is expressed on a number of levels, including economic, social, cultural and spiritual and continues the privileging of the nation mode which is characteristic of Chinese fiction since May Fourth. The difference between May Fourth fiction and the fiction of the 1980s is that the latter is garbed in new, modernist forms which reflect these writers' "dissidence" from the tyranny of traditional modes.
Among these four writers, Gao Xiaosheng is the most consistent about the source of peasant distress and suffering. Unlike the *xungen* writers, he does not concern himself with the cultural values of the common people which, according to some writers, are to blame for China's present social crisis. In Gao's fiction, the crisis of the rural areas is a direct result of the inefficiencies and corruption of the Chinese Communist Party, its authoritarian control and its total disregard of the lives and the well-being of the common people. The peasant in this rural world is a hapless victim of shifting policy and bureaucratic botchery and is expected to cope the best he can. In his later fiction, Gao visualizes a rural world in which the peasants are finally able to create a more ideal life under social and economic reforms.

In the works of the *xungen* writers, on the other hand, culture is reestablished as the primary factor in the material and emotional well-being or lack thereof of the Chinese peasants. Among these writers, Shi Tiesheng evinces the greatest tolerance and even identification for traditional culture which he depicts as delicate yet capable of contributing in a meaningful way to the modern, urban world. The greatest threat to this rural world in Shi's fiction is not modern values; on the contrary, this threat derives from the evil and totalitarian practices of the Chinese Communist Party which rewards loyalty with abuse, cruelty and death.

Shi Tiesheng's vision and empathy stand in strong contrast to the bifurcation toward traditional culture found in the works of Han Shaogong and the ambivalence of this writer about both the traditional and modern worlds. In "Return," for instance, the urbanized narrator is ambivalent about the urban world which he temporarily left behind and the traditional values which he encounters in the village to which he returns. The greatest difficulty this narrator encounters is not his acceptance of his personal history and the cultural history of the nation but in integrating these two sets of values. "Bababa," on the
other hand is a more consistently harsh condemnation of traditional culture in the manner of the cultural iconoclasm of Lu Xun. Modern values, however, are also rejected in this story which leaves the reader unclear about the future of Chinese culture and Han's concept of the eventual reconstruction of a superior "Eastern culture." Han's quest for the roots of Chinese culture lies in a future ideal which remains uncertain and is beyond the reach of the common person.

Mo Yan, the final writer discussed in this chapter is the most subjective and the most successful at unearthing the mystical and spiritual aspects of the roots of Chinese culture. Mo Yan's world is not as grim and nightmarish as Han Shaogong's; however, within this world, a young peasant boy uncovers a way to the truth which leads to his personal liberation from the horrible realities of his world. Mo Yan's spiritual motif may derive from the Chinese Buddhist tradition which, the story implies, may ultimately be the sole source of well-being and comfort for China's benighted peasants. This motif reflects the staying power of the most fundamental aspects of China's traditional culture which has survived political chaos and three decades of attempts to destroy it.
Conclusion

The discussion of *xiangtu wenxue* in this dissertation comprises a survey of the various regional and temporal expressions of this literary subgenre. This survey makes one point very clear and that is that even though *xiangtu wenxue* comprises a mere subgenre, there are numerous, diverse types of *xiangtu wenxue* within this subgenre which evolved under very disparate circumstances. These different types are bound together by two major images or issues: the first is the image of the countryside which is the medium in this literature for revelations about contemporary Chinese social and political life; the second is the issue of traditional Chinese culture which is conflated with or embedded in the countryside and carries the message these writers wish to convey about modernity, about urbanization and about themselves as participants in twentieth-century China. The issue of culture is represented in contrasting favourable and unfavourable ways.

The culture question has preoccupied Chinese intellectuals since the nineteenth century, and, in the twentieth, Chinese culture-- whether that found in the Confucian values in contemporary life or in the traditional values of the countryside-- remains the fundamental bond unifying Chinese life. Other factors, such as the breakdown of the imperial order associated with the 1920s, the rise of Chinese Communism or the impact of imperialist aggression, are also determinants in the configuration of twentieth century life, not to mention the growth of *xiangtu wenxue*. These factors contributed, for instance, to the positivist literary mode of the 1920s, the programmatic fiction of the 1930s, Taiwanese colonial fiction of the 1920s and the works of China's Northeastern writers, especially Xiao Jun and Duanmu Hongliang. Nonetheless, the question of the worth of Chinese culture in all the different periods of *xiangtu wenxue* indicates that culture, not Communism or China's relations with the Other, is the most fundamental and permanent issue in China's ongoing search for modernity.
The issue of culture became the focal point of examination in the nineteenth century when China first encountered modernity. At that time, Chinese intellectuals began to examine the assumed universal validity of Chinese culture and to question the Confucian classics as the repository of morals and aesthetics for China's rapidly changing society. Later, intellectuals such as Kang Youwei, Chen Duxiu and Lu Xun conceived certain ambivalent theories about Chinese traditional culture, specifically, that Chinese culture was responsible for China's ongoing national ills. They also maintained that the anachronistic culture of China was the cause for China's inability to maintain parity with the West.¹ These unfavourable views are present in the works of certain writers of xiangtu wenxue where they are sometimes depicted in an even more pronounced way than they are in the fiction of Lu Xun. One or two Chinese writers of xiangtu wenxue even reject traditional culture outright and maintain that it has little of positive value to offer to modern life.

Lu Xun was the first writer of xiangtu wenxue to posit an unfavourable view of traditional Chinese culture. Lu Xun maintained that in order for the Chinese organism to achieve health and reform, it must undergo a total, fundamental break with the entire cultural and social order of the past. Lu Xun's view was the source for his holistic antitraditionalism and his cultural iconoclasm which served as a creative inspiration for the generation of writers of xiangtu wenxue of the 1920s. Like Lu Xun, these writers of xiangtu wenxue formulated a number of motifs through which they expressed their view that Chinese traditional culture tends to cripple the national consciousness. This unfavourable view is also consistently maintained in the works of Xiao Hong. In Xiao Hong's Tales of Hulan River, for instance, tradition has made slaves of the peasants who choose to remain so instead of initiating any change. This attitude on the part of the peasants is a universal determinant in the cyclical non-development of Chinese tradition. In this and other works by this author, traditional culture also accounts for the ongoing, oppressive

treatment of Chinese women whom outmoded customs and traditions have reduced to a state of social bondage.

In contrast to this unfavourable view, certain writers of xiangtu wenxue, such as the writers on Taiwan and the xungen writer Shi Tiesheng, ascribe consistently positive values to Chinese traditional culture. In the view of these writers, the countryside is the heart of an essential Chinese traditionalism which has value for modern life; it is also a positive element in the future of the Chinese nation. Needless to say, this favourable view contrasts strongly with the unfavourable one above and points to a bifurcation in, or a lack of a clear-cut, consistent view about, Chinese traditional culture, whether on the part of China's writers, its intellectuals or the Chinese common people.

The favourable view of Chinese culture parallels the populist, historical view of the countryside and rural life. Historically, the countryside occupied a special place in the Chinese heart, and even urban-based intellectuals maintained strong ties with their rural homes. Ruralism was traditionally regarded as a source of wisdom and virtue, and the contrast of rural purity with the avowed immorality of the cities was pointed out in the seventeenth century by the imperial official, Gu Yanwu, and, in the twentieth, by Mao Zedong. In Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s, rampant modernization forced Taiwanese writers of xiangtu wenxue to recognize the fragility of their cultural traditions, to embrace them and to turn a blind eye to the rural bonds of oppression.

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The attachment to the rural home is also a recurring and compelling motif in traditional literature. Bo Juyi, for instance, wrote lyric verse in which he reminisced about his rural home after taking up office.

3 Gu Yanwu's sentiment is as follows:

Goodness develops only in the village, evil in the city. The city is the place of commerce and trade. People relate to one another only with the aim of making profits. They are superficial and pretentious. As a result, the city is a sink of iniquities. The village is different. There people are self-reliant and have deep emotional ties with each other.

(Quoted in Murphey 24.)
These writers ascribed a moral ascendancy to Taiwan's indigenous cultural forms—symbolized as the "Race of Generals" in Chen Yingzhen's story by that name—and sought in rural Taiwan a transcendent China which predated the invasion by the West. The works of these writers manifest their rejection of modernity coupled with the desire to counteract foreign influence. This desire is reminiscent of local cultural responses to foreign invasion which occurred during different historical periods. In the mid-1980s, Shi Tiesheng similarly evinces nostalgia for a bygone life and culture which must be nurtured in order to contribute to modern life. In contrast to the writers of Taiwan, Shi Tiesheng's validation of rural life grew out of his rustification experience. Where there is evil in the countryside in Shi's works, this evil is attributed not to traditional culture per se but, instead, to the cruel practices of rural Party elites.

Finally, the third and largest group of writers of xiangtu wenxue evince both favourable and unfavourable views of traditional culture which reflects the bifurcation in their individual mode of thought. Shen Congwen, for instance, romanticizes the peasant and the countryside in most of his fiction. This tendency arose from his attitudes of Han paternalism, from Hunan's regional decay, from his rejection of his cultural tradition and from his desire to subvert Han Confucianism. Other works by this author, however, such as "Xiaoxiao" and "Guisheng," evince a type of holistic antitraditionalism which is reminiscent of Lu Xun's. A second xungen writer, Han Shaogong, evinces the most extreme bifurcation which accounts for his two opposing representations of traditional Chinese culture. The narrator in "Return," for instance, evinces favourable feelings for traditional culture which he uncovers in the rural mountain village. "Bababa," on the other hand, is a harsh condemnation of Chinese culture which is blamed for China's cyclical non-development. Mo Yan is similarly ambivalent. In some of his fiction, the horrors of the rural world are deeply rooted in popular rural ways while in others these horrors are attributed to the rural Party elites. In at least one story, on the other hand, the positive cultural symbols of the rural world represent traditional Chinese spirituality. The ambivalence and bifurcation of these writers stem from their failure to reconcile traditional Chinese values with the facts of Chinese modernity.
Nativism

In conclusion, I maintain that the contradictory, inconsistent representation of the countryside and of Chinese traditional culture in *xiangtu wenxue* is rooted in the rapid, disorienting nature of China's recent urbanization. Compared to the countries of the West, this urbanization is relatively new and has been imposed on China by stronger international powers. The patterns of migration from the country to the city in both China and Taiwan mirrors that in any newly industrializing country, but in both places it has determined the narrative configuration of these works. The migration to the city involves the psychological metamorphosis of the individual from a ruralite to an urbanite. The majority of writers of *xiangtu wenxue*-- from Wang Luyan in the 1920s to Chen Yingzhen in the 1970s and Mo Yan in the 1980s-- experienced difficulty in bridging this transition. Accordingly, these writers are urbanized to varying degrees and none is able to fully integrate his vision of the countryside into a larger vision of modernity. The conceptions of Chinese culture which these writers conceive within the context of the past are conditioned by their experiences in the urban present and also by their degree of intimate, first-hand rural knowledge. In general, it appears that the more urbanized a writer is the greater his idealization of Chinese culture is. This idealization is accompanied by the rejection of all facets of modernity. Sometimes, as in the case of Han Shaogong, it is accompanied by the rejection of tradition and his reservations about modernity. This rejection reflects on China's present social crisis; however, in Han Shaogong's case, it also derives from this writer's incomplete urban metamorphosis. In the final analysis, this same incomplete metamorphosis characterizes the creativity of all these writers. Not until this process of urbanization is complete will we see attitudes of ambivalence about Chinese traditional culture disappear from modern Chinese fiction.
This bibliography is divided into the two main categories of Chinese and English sources. These categories are subdivided into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include stories, novels or novellas, collections and anthologies. Secondary sources are subdivided into critical works which include articles and books, prefaces to collections, interviews and dissertations, and reference works.

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(glossaries, dictionaries)


Appendix

The following Chinese texts are longer excerpts from the stories and novels discussed in the body of the thesis. The page number following each excerpt is the page in the thesis where the translation of that excerpt appears.

关于“乡土文学”，我以为单有了特殊的风土人情的描写，只不过像看一幅异域的图画，虽然引起我们的惊异，然而给我们的，只是好奇心的满足。因此在特殊的风土人情以外，应当还有普遍性的与我们共同的对于运命的挣扎。一个具有真挚家的眼光的作者，往往只能给我们以前者，必须是一个具有一定的世界观与人生观的作者方能把后者作为主要的一点而给予我们。

(p. 25)

(p. 27)
最先走過的是兩個送嫂。她們的背上各斜披着一幅大紅樣子，送去約過去有半米遠近，隊伍

就到了，他們是兩樣紅色的大燈籠。燈籠後面，八面旗子八個吹手，隨後便是一長排精製的逼真的各

等級的輔助。輔助後面一頂香亭，亭後纔是菊英的轎子，轎子與平常花轎不同，不過紅色便是青色。四

面結著紅色的絨毯，面結著彩，後面跟送着兩個坐轎的和許多預備在中途折回的步行的孩子。架上蓋著紅色的絨毯，面結著彩。

我已經是想到過二十歲的人了，從老遠的貴州跑到北京來。灰沙之中彷徨了也快七年，時間

不能說不長，怎樣混過的，而自身都茫然不知。是這樣匆匆地一天一天的去了，童年的影子越來模糊

的幾篇新詩和似是而非的小說之外，還做了什麼呢？每一回憶，終不免有點悔恨攔駁心頭。所以現在

決然把這個小說集付印了。……藉以紀念從此閤別的可愛的童年。……
男女都穿着學校的制服，雙手交握於胸前。指

輝榜和小鋼受很整齊地放置在腳前，閃閃發光，他們看來安詳、靜謐，卻另有一種滑稽中的威嚴。

往場地的小路的右手邊立著這間他們住草寮，彷彿站在屋頂了的空氣裏的老人家，誰來得

多麼！也並非獨門戶，隔遠又有些的地方還有一間茅屋在那裏。那茅屋住著的一家人，心裏

起晚間場地特有鳥騷，一年前還地發覺到村裏人氣氣氛的依去。

坤樹十分高興。這份活現使他有了阿龍，有了阿龍叫他忍耐這活兒的艱苦。

「鬼咧！你以兄阿龍真正喜荒你羅？ce孩仔以鳥真的有你現在的這樣一個人哪！」

「不至於吧。但這孩子越來越有生了。」

部歷史，大半的時間你都打扮好這

「阿龍，我是阿龍的玩偶，大玩偶？」

（p. 69）（p. 86）（p. 90）（p. 93）（p. 96）
身上那件刚下过
头水的鱼肚白竹布衫子，罩上一条省青布围腰，圆腴腴的脸庞
上稀稀的垫了一点粉，耳朵下垂着一对金晃晃的圈圈环子，
头上那块青细绸又低低的缠到眉毛以上五分左右的额边，衣衫
既撑撑粼粼，粉又不象别的妇人打的忘了顾到脖子，
(p. 112)

一、坚持文学创作中的党性原则和社会主义性质；
二、坚持现实主义传统；
三、继承和发展中国文学的民族风格；
四、继承和发扬强烈的中国气派和
浓郁的地方色彩；
五、描写农村的风土人情和农民的
历史和时代的命运。
(202)

无可否认，在打破“闭关锁国”式的
墨守前古的同时，也滋长了一种迷信资
产阶级现代派文学的错误倾向。在一些
人看来，中国文学要发展，只有引进西
方现代派文学。于是，象征主义、存在
主义、意识流之类，便成了最时髦的东
西，很多人争相模仿，趋之若鹜。与此
相反，中国的民间文学，中华传统的艺
术方法，却被冷落，被轻视，被批评家
厌恶而加以抛弃。

(pp. 203-204)
氢酸、磷酸等，及一些化学药品等。酸由氯桶中抽到高塔，放入罐内，再分到瓶子中配酸，然后移入蒸发器，洗砂、晶体等材料；材料经蒸馏处理后，进入烤箱烘干，再变至生产线加工。

一九六八年，美国总统富布，向比利时的美，致力于化学工程的开发。有一度酸性酸的酒吧，这时期，突然像见了曙光，一下子又蓬勃了起来。原来在台北、嘉义、台中、高雄等地方的酒吧，纷纷重振起来，也成立了像吧女的。每当他们有特别的，就变成酒吧了。茶牌和著他们的心里，每个人都有说不出的那样，她们的化装品也大的变化起来。以前用不着的眼膏、假睫毛，所有酸性的化装品都变得模糊。所以每个人都要有一对像歌星等著的化装箱了。想像中好像看见即

(p. 223)  (237)  (pp. 242–243)
紅萝卜的形状和大小都像一个大个阳梨，
还拖着一条长尾巴，尾巴上的根根须须象金色的羊毛。
红萝卜晶莹透明，玲珑剔透。透明的、金色的
外壳里蕴含着活泼的银色液体。红萝卜的线条流畅
优美，从美丽的弧线上泛出一圈金色的光芒。光芒
有长有短，长的如麦芒，短的如睫毛，全是金色，……