

Z H A N G T I A N Y I : CRITICAL ANALYSIS

OF HIS DEVELOPMENT AS A WRITER OF FICTION

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Abstract

Born in 1906 in Nanjing, Zhang began writing in his teens for "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly" magazines in Shanghai. After 1929, he wrote short stories, middle-length stories, novels and two plays, all in a realistic style. The eighty-odd short stories Zhang wrote between 1929 and 1938 provided the basis for his reputation as a writer of fiction in the pre-liberation period. After 1938, Zhang concentrated on writing literary criticism and theory and after contracting tuberculosis in 1942 he all but stopped writing. Upon the establishment of the Communist republic in 1949, Zhang was assigned to several posts in the literary leadership and wrote a few didactic works for children as well as theoretical and critical articles. He wrote nothing of note after 1960 and his health deteriorated after suffering a stroke in 1975. Zhang died on 28 April, 1985.

This thesis considers Zhang's development as a writer of fiction, concentrating attention on the period 1929 to 1938 when Zhang produced his most noteworthy works, but also analysing the place in his career of the recently rediscovered stories written between 1922 and 1928. Zhang's critical and theoretical writings are considered for what they reveal of his literary ideals and are considered as an index to Zhang's success as a writer of fiction.

Zhang's development as a writer of fiction is considered chronologically and contemporary political, historical, social and literary influences are alluded to whenever pertinent.

Zhang's short stories are also measured against the yardstick of Western practice in the writing of short stories and conventional and unconventional uses of the genre by Zhang are pointed out.

Appendices contain a biographical entry about Zhang written in the light of recently published material about Zhang's life and interviews with his family and friends; together with translations of several previously untranslated stories by Zhang.

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All errors and shortcomings are entirely my own.

Chapter One

Introducing Zhang Tianyi

Zhang Tianyi was born at the end of the Qing dynasty in the year 1906 into a well-respected Hunanese family. Both Zhang's parents were members of the late Qing literati. Zhang went to school at the time when the traditional Chinese education system was being replaced by an education system borrowed from abroad. He, like Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Ba Jin and other fiction writers of this period, grew up having both a thorough grounding in traditional Chinese literature as well as a more than passing acquaintance with the traditional and contemporary literatures of several nations (mostly of course through translations of the original works).

Zhang's early life is not well documented, but we know from the few autobiographical reminiscences he wrote and published that his parents were both fond of the Arts and encouraged his childhood interest in literature. Recently with the attribution of the pseudonym Zhang Wuzheng to Zhang Tianyi a new light has most fortunately been shed on his early development as a writer of fiction. Zhang wrote a number of detective stories and short pieces of reportage in his teens which were published in 'Mandarin Duck and Butterfly' magazines of the day.

Some more of Zhang's earliest writings — three semi-realistic pieces which have been described as "so-called Symbolist" works ¹ and appeared in the literary supplement of a Beijing newspaper in the years 1925, 1926 and 1927 — have also recently been re-discovered. These precursors of Zhang's first story to achieve critical acclaim, "A Dream lasting Three and a Half Days", help to make the appearance in 1928 of this, Zhang's first modern short story written in a realistic mode, less surprising and prodigious. It is now clear that from his schooldays on Zhang

1 Edgar Snow, Living China, 265.

experimented with various literary styles. The detective stories and semi-realistic pieces help to fill out the picture of a young writer experimenting with form, but Zhang himself suggests that these published works are but a tiny portion of his experimental scribings. At present all that is known for certain is that Zhang grew disenchanted with the 'Mandarin Duck and Butterfly' school of literature in about 1923, abruptly ceasing to send in his manuscripts to such magazines as Banyue 《半^②》 and Libai liu 《礼^拜六》. What other types of literature Zhang experimented with after this and before he started to write semi-realistic stories in 1925 is as yet unknown.

Zhang succeeded in winning the attention of Lu Xun when he sent him the manuscript of his story "A Dream lasting Three and a Half Days". Lu Xun was favourably impressed by Zhang's story, persuaded Zhang to use his own name rather than an adopted pseudonym and arranged for the publication of this, Zhang's first modern short story, in the magazine Benliu 《奔流》 which Lu Xun and Yu Dafu edited jointly.

Publication of Zhang's short stories in magazines of the day was at first modest in quantity; in 1929, he published only "A Dream lasting Three and a Half Days", whilst in 1930, he had five short stories published.

On the second of March 1930, the League of Left Wing Writers was officially established at a meeting of literary figures in Shanghai. There is no evidence to suggest that Zhang Tianyi was amongst those who attended the inaugural meeting,¹ but his subsequent participation in League activities and the publication of his stories in League magazines suggest that he was an active member of the League within a short time of its inception.

According to a recently published chronicle of Zhang's

¹ Zhang was apparently working in Nanjing at the time, see Shen et al., 'Zhang Tianyi shengping yu wenxue huodong nianbiao', 274.

activities¹ his participation in the League of Left Wing Writers began in September 1931. By early 1932, Zhang was an active participant in the literary and political activities of the League. He assisted Feng Xuefeng in the editing of the news-sheet Shizi jietou 《十字街头》 and he was reportedly one of the League members who carried the League banner at an anti-Nationalist demonstration in January 1932.²

Participation in the League had the essential effect of politicising Zhang's literary activities, providing him with ready vehicles for his literary creations, namely the various magazines supported and run by the League. Initially patronised by Lu Xun, for whom he retained a lasting gratitude, Zhang now came to know many other important left-wing writers and critics who participated in League and anti-Japanese activities.

During the years 1932 to 1936 in particular, Zhang wrote and published a large number of short stories as well as several novels and this brought him considerable fame and at the same time incurred the wrath of the Nationalist authorities who banned several of his works.³ Zhang became an important figure in the left-wing literary movement, attracting to himself a reputation for writing sharp, satirical short stories about contemporary society, fulfilling a function similar to that filled by Lu Xun a decade earlier when he produced his short story collections Nahan 《呐喊》 and Panghuang 《彷徨》.

Zhang's main contribution to Modern Chinese literature has been his large body of short stories depicting life in China in the 1930s. These stories fall into the mainstream of the

1 Shen et al., 274.

2 Shen et al., 275.

3 The novels A Diary of Ghostland, One Year and Cogwheel, the short story collection From Emptiness to Fullness, and the children's story 'Big Lin and Little Lin' were all at one time or another proscribed by the Nationalist authorities.

'modern short story' whilst at the same time preserving a distinctively Chinese flavour. Though Zhang used a Western literary form his stories do not appear un-Chinese. Where he did depart from the norm, however, was in his use of child narrative viewpoint in such stories as 'Chocolate' 《巧格力》 and 'A Couple of Chums' 《朋友俩》 amongst others. In these stories Zhang attempted something that not many writers of the genre venture to try and this early interest in life as children see it, together with his story written for children 'Big Lin and Little Lin' 《大林和小林》 (first published in 1932) make Zhang's turn to children's fiction after 1949 less inexplicable.

The degree to which Zhang's writing was directed by the needs and aims of the League of Left-wing Writers cannot be gauged with any certainty, but it is certain that from 1932 onwards Zhang was in close contact with members and leaders of this organisation, and in particular with Feng Xuefeng 冯雪峰 . For instance in May 1937 in Shanghai, at Feng's suggestion, Zhang helped set up informal gatherings of young writers like Sha Ding, Ai Wu, Jiang Muliang, Chen Baichen and Duanmu Hongliang. As an already established writer of note, Zhang was in a position to advise and give the lead to up-and-coming young writers. Furthermore in mid-September 1937 on the instructions of Feng Xuefeng, Zhang left Shanghai to go to Hunan to assist there with anti-Japanese work organised by Hunan cultural activists. At the beginning of 1938, Zhang took up a post at Beiping minguo College 北平民国学院 in Changsha teaching 'Creative writing'. This effectively marked the end of his career as a writer of adult fiction and from this time until the autumn of 1942 when Zhang became seriously ill and incapacitated with tuberculosis his time was taken up with teaching, researching and writing literary criticism. Whether the muse had deserted Zhang or whether he was under new instructions as to his role in the literary establishment is a question that has so far not been answered.

One of Zhang's last works of adult fiction, first published in April 1938, was 'Mr. Hua Wei' 《华威先生》. This short story aroused considerable critical debate in the years succeeding its first publication. There were those who suggested that Zhang's story was an unhelpful exposé of bad elements within the left wing literary establishment thus having the effect of weakening morale. Others saw the story as a timely revelation of insidious malaise and went on the war-path to know the identity of the 'real' Mr. Hua Wei. The debate became even more fractious when the Japanese lifted Zhang's story and published it in translation in a Japanese magazine as an example of disarray and incompetence in the enemy ranks. Zhang was clearly much chagrined by the reaction to his story and his subsequent disinclination to write adult fiction may have been precipitated by his feelings of disillusionment.

Zhang ceased to write anything at all after he contracted tuberculosis in September 1942. He came close to death and his recuperation was lengthy and it was not until some time after the establishment of the new republic in 1949 that Zhang was able to leave his sickbed in Hong Kong and make his way to join the newly formed literary leadership in Beijing. Apparently in recognition of his pre-liberation contribution to literature, Zhang was subsequently given several important posts in the literary leadership, at one time or another editing the influential Renmin wenxue 《人民文学》 and working as a Secretary of the Chinese Writers' Union. Also apparently at the instigation of the literary leadership, Zhang was commissioned to write children's fiction. To his eternal credit, he produced some passable if shamelessly didactic stories and plays for children that have ensured him a continuing reputation in the People's Republic of China to the present day and beyond.

Chapter Two

Zhang's childhood and his early literary
experience (1906-29)Introduction

Zhang Tianyi was born in Nanjing in 1906 into a fairly well-connected educated family whose fortunes were in decline. Zhang received an education that was at first classical in content and ideology, and only when in his teens did he start to come increasingly in contact with the New Culture Movement prevalent at the time in China.

He grew up in the 1910s when society and its attitudes were in a constant state of flux; almost every aspect of life was affected by the political and cultural undercurrents running through society at that time.

The middle (secondary) school that Zhang attended in Hangzhou was the Zongwen Middle School 杭州私立宗文中学, one of only two privately run secondary schools in the area catering purely for boys and run by Chinese rather than foreigners. The teachers did their best to suppress interest in the New Culture Movement and the new colloquial language and literature. It was, however, only a question of time before such schools were forced to acknowledge and come to terms with the presence in society of New Culture. Zhang refers to the arrival of a young teacher of Chinese language at his middle school who encouraged the pupils to read extra-curricular reading material. It was only then for the first time that the students were able to read magazines and novels openly instead of secretly doing so whilst their stricter teachers were not looking.¹

Zhang, like other youngsters growing up at this time, could not have avoided the confrontation that took place with the arrival of culture from abroad to challenge the supremacy of existing traditional culture in China.

¹ 'My youthful existence', Wenxue zazhi 1:2 (15. 5. 1933) 63.

Many factors would have combined to influence and shape the young Zhang and set him on the road towards literary creativity. Of these factors, the most important were probably the society in which Zhang found himself growing up, the influence of his family, the influence of friends and schoolfriends, and the effect that the education he received had upon him.

The influence of Zhang's home environment

In May 1933, Zhang published an autobiographical reminiscence entitled 'My youthful existence' 我的幼年生活 in which he reflected on his family, his schooldays and some of his childhood experiences.¹

Zhang began his essay by reflecting laconically about his ancestors:

I am not very clear about the circumstances of my ancestors. Apparently we were a so-called 'shijia' [世家, i.e. a family holding official ranks for several generations] that had a little land Later on our family gradually became poorer and poorer until we were so poor that we were on our uppers.

More recently in a short autobiographical sketch, Zhang has written even more unequivocally about his father's family:

When I was young I learned from my father that his elder brother was an office-holder and money-maker who had in the past bullied our side of the family, so I wanted to gain revenge on office-holders and money-makers like my uncle.²

Whilst Zhang would seem to have had little respect or regard for his ancestors and the more ambitious, ruthless members of his father's family, he invariably wrote with affection about his mother, his father and one of his sisters.

1 Wenxue zazhi 1:2 (15. 5. 1933) 61-66.

2 Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan 1980:2 (9. 1980) 276.

Of his father, Zhang wrote in 1933:

He is a humorous old man who likes making satirical remarks. He treats his children like friends. He lets them go their own way, In this I believe he has been influenced by newspapers and magazines He has read a lot of novels, and also knows a lot of jokes His calligraphy is very good.

Speaking in more general terms of his parents' influence, Zhang wrote:

They did not interfere with their children's opinions, fads and behaviour, but they exerted nonetheless a great influence over their sons and daughters.

The implication from Zhang's autobiographical writings is that his parents were members of the intelligentsia who took a more than passing interest in literature.

Writing about his mother, Zhang said:

Mother is a person with lots of emotions. She often used to tell me stories. Once when she was reading out Lin Shu's translation of Dickens's Old Curiosity Shop, she wept continually Her self-confidence is extremely strong, and she is keen to have a go at anything Once she let me have a look at a copy of a weekly with a large circulation, in which there was a short piece that she had written under an assumed name, in which she had pointed out that the articles about problems between the sexes published in this periodical were misleading, because they were written entirely from the male point of view, and because there was no true equality between men and women at the present time, as well as other arguments of this nature

In these descriptions of his parents, Zhang draws attention to their literary proclivities: his father reads "newspapers and magazines" and "has read a lot of novels;" his mother read Zhang stories when he was a child and wrote an article that was published in a popular weekly of the day.

Of Zhang's brothers and sisters, the person who had the greatest influence on him was his second eldest sister, a woman sixteen years older than Zhang who was progressive in her views.¹ She helped her young brother learn how to read and later on alerted Zhang to many things of interest in letters to him, also drawing his attention to books she thought he ought to read. Zhang wrote of her:

She loves to tell rambling jokes, and describe people, always getting to the bottom of others' characters.

The picture that is built up by Zhang in his autobiographical reminiscence 'My youthful existence' is of a home environment conducive to creativity and literary pursuits. In writing of his life at six or seven years of age, Zhang records that both his parents used to tell him stories and that an old servant would tell him a story every night before he went to sleep.

The son of Zhang's eldest sister, a boy three years Zhang's junior, came to live with the family upon the death of his mother in 1915. Zhang with the help of his new friend put on theatrical and musical performances to entertain the family's old servant Lao Wang ma 老王妈 and occasionally Zhang's parents. About the same period, Zhang also set up an imaginary bookshop writing little books three or four pages long, containing stories that he remembered or ones that he had made up himself, to put in the shop. At the same time Zhang put out a daily news-sheet containing stories, jokes and drawings. Zhang's cousin was the sole reader of the news-sheet.

¹ Zhang was the youngest of fifteen children, though several of his brothers and sisters died young, and according to Shen Chengkuan (Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22. 5. 1981) 272) the number of people in Zhang's immediate family was five including Zhang himself. This apparent discrepancy can best be explained by positing that the fifteen children were the sum total of the children born to Zhang's father and Zhang's paternal uncles.

More formally Zhang has revealed that shortly after entering primary school he won a prize of a collection of children's stories edited by Sun Yuxiu 孫毓修. His mother helped him to read the parts that he had difficulty with, and he gradually became accustomed to reading on his own, exhausting the collections of children's stories published by the Commercial Press and the China Press.

The influence of Zhang's education and his schoolfriends.

Zhang entered a primary school in Nanjing in 1912 when he was six years old but before long his parents moved to Hangzhou and Zhang entered a primary school there which he attended from 1913 to 1920 with occasional interruptions in his attendance owing to his father's moving about in search of employment. He received a traditional education; the classes made considerable use of the ancient classics like Mencius. When Zhang moved up to the senior part of the primary school in about 1918 he was made to read Confucius' Analects 《论语》 for the purpose of his moral education. Reminiscing about his schooldays in 1933, Zhang recalled that as a young primary school-child he had cursed having to learn by heart passages from the Mencius.

Outside class, Zhang pursued his interest in fiction; moving on from children's stories, he started to read the great classic novels of the colloquial language repertoire like The Biography of Yue Fei 《岳传》, Generals of the Yang clan 《杨家将》, Journey to the West 《西游记》, Romance of the Three Kingdoms 《三国演义》, The Water Margin 《水浒传》, The Law-cases of Lord Peng 《彭公案》, and others. At both primary and secondary school it was frowned upon to read fiction; the headmaster of Zhang's middle school who was fiercely opposed to the new vernacular fiction that started to appear in the late 1910s, on one occasion reputedly remarked: "All fiction, no matter what, is harmful".¹

1 'My youthful existence', Wenxue zazhi 1:2 (15. 5. 1933) 63.

In autobiographical accounts, Zhang gives the impression that he was a rebellious, insubordinate, non-conformist spirit at school, always fighting with his classmates, reading novels or writing letters whilst the teacher's back was turned. Zhang claims to have been no good at any of the subjects taught at school, but reveals that the teachers at his primary school thought it likely that he would make a name for himself as a calligrapher since he had a good hand. At secondary school Zhang gained a reputation amongst his peers for recounting stories; his friends would gather round and ask him to tell a story. By this time (Zhang entered Zongwen Middle School in 1920), he was using the local public library which had such books as translations by Lin Shu 林纾 (also known as Lin Qinnan 林琴南) as well as a lot of detective stories. He found that works like Walter Scott's Ivanhoe, humorous novels by Dickens and Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories proved most popular with his friends. He would appear to have had a gift for oral story-telling for he records that on occasions he was forced to run away in order to escape from his circle of insatiable listeners, avid for the story-telling session to continue.¹

During his final years at Zongwen Middle School, Zhang began in about 1922 to write stories and short articles. He and a few other like-minded friends who were also fellow-pupils — Zhang mentions the poets Dai Wangshu and Du Heng — writing under the influence of Lin Shu's work and the "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly" school of literature, sent manuscripts to Shanghai magazines like Libai liu 《礼拜六》 and Banyue 《半月》. By the time Zhang graduated from Zongwen Middle School in 1924, about twenty or so stories and short pieces that he had written under the pseudonym Zhang Wuzheng had been published in the magazines Libai liu, Banyue and Zhentan shijie 《侦探世界》.

Influences on Zhang's literary development: a summary.

Before embarking on a critical analysis of the stories that

¹ 'My youthful existence', Wenxue zazhi 1:2 (15. 5. 1933) 61-66.

Zhang published in 1922 and 1923 when he was sixteen and seventeen, I shall summarise the influence that parents, friends and schooling had upon his development. What is quickly and clearly apparent is the contrast between a liberal home atmosphere and a traditional authoritarian school environment. From the relatively scanty information that is available about Zhang's parents, they appear to have been broad-minded individuals who encouraged their children to keep their minds open to new ideas. It is interesting to ponder the conflict between what Zhang was encouraged to think at home and what he was encouraged to think at school. Whilst trying to avoid the temptation to indulge in psychological speculation, it is hard to ignore Zhang's rebelliousness. He says of himself that as a youngster of four or five he was a disobedient child in the home, making a nuisance of himself by knocking on people's doors and not stopping even when they asked or told him to stop.¹ At school he was apparently always in trouble for fighting with his classmates, another sign that he was disinclined to be in awe of authority and his elders. His headmaster's disdain of fiction and the colloquial language did nothing at all to deter Zhang from devoting his life to the pursuit of literature.

Whilst, until the arrival of a new young teacher of Chinese language who encouraged the reading of current magazines and fiction, there was no encouragement at Zhang's middle school given to students attracted by fiction and movements for New Culture, Zhang's home life did encourage interest in new ideas and cultural pursuits of all kinds.

Zhang came increasingly in contact with Western literature as he grew up, firstly through the translations of Lin Shu and later through first-hand reading of English originals.²

1 'My youthful existence', Wenxue zazhi 1:2 (15. 5. 1933) 61-66.

2 Personal interview with Shen Chengkuan, Beijing, 1. 4. 1981. Shen Chengkuan claims that Zhang had a working knowledge of English which enabled him to read fiction and literary criticism in English.

Zhang unlike Lu Xun, Yu Dafu, Guo Moruo and other writers of the twenties and thirties did not have the benefit of a period of study abroad to widen his horizons. Whereas others of Zhang's contemporaries and near-contemporaries came into direct contact with the manifestations of Western and foreign culture as a result of periods of study abroad (either in Japan, America or Europe) Zhang himself did not go abroad either during his student days or subsequently. Zhang's contact with and absorption of foreign culture was in consequence indirect and limited to those aspects of the alien culture that filtered through to China's urban centres in the 1920s and 1930s. Bearing this fact in mind, the skill with which Zhang adopted the modern short story form and turned it to his own literary purposes is all the more remarkable.

Zhang's first known published work: 'New Poetry'

The first piece of fiction known to have been written by Zhang (using the pseudonym Zhang Wuzheng 张无诤) that has so far been discovered was published in the Shanghai "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School" magazine Libai liu, 《礼拜六》 on 8 April, 1922. According to a note appended at the end of the story by the editor of the periodical, Zhang declined payment for this published work. 'New Poetry' 新诗, is a very short little story, about 700 characters long, that would seem simultaneously to satirize traditional and contemporary views about poetry. The language in which the story is written is most interesting and would repay careful linguistic analysis. It is written neither in the traditional classical language, 'wenyan' 文言, nor in the pure modern colloquial language, 'baihua' 白话. Familiarly speaking, this language, though closer to 'baihua' than to 'wenyan', is known as 'ban wen bu bai' 半文不白 (i.e. a hybrid that is neither pure 'wenyan' nor pure 'baihua'). The style used by Zhang in this first published story is also worthy of note; Zhang is jocular almost to the point of being flippant.

The story which is at once comical and satirical is about a husband and wife who disagree about the merit of modern vernacular poetry. The husband, Huang Zunqi 黄遵妻 is a copy-book

stick-in-the-mud, redolent of old books and conservative attitudes. He makes great efforts to supervise and take a sympathetic interest in the activities of his wife Silai 斯莱. Unlike her husband, Silai is a 'bright young thing' who has a penchant for writing 'modern poetry' (i.e. verse that does not rhyme) and wearing modish clothes (i.e. a short skirt and pink silk stockings). The wife's attempts to write modern poetry are absolutely hilarious and cause Huang Zunqi considerable dismay and discomfort as he vainly searches for rhymes and a rhyme scheme.

The satire used by Zhang in this story would seem to be double-edged, even to the extent that it is hard to ascertain exactly where Zhang's own sympathies lie. Fun is poked at the husband, Huang, whose stolid attitudes are made to appear lugubrious and over-solicitous. Meanwhile, in satirizing the wife's attempts to write 'new' verse, Zhang would appear to be making an indirect and generalized comment on modern vernacular poetry. He satirizes the repetitive nature of modern poetry by quoting from Silai's 'poem':

He ran past. He ran back again. He ran past again. He ran back again.

(伊跑了过去, 伊又跑了过来, 伊又跑了过去, 伊又跑了过来。)

He also satirizes its often exclamatory nature:

Oh oh you see, you see, you see

(噢 噢 你看, 你看, 你看)

and the way in which it manages to combine the banal with the abstruse:

I wore my short jacket, and my short skirt
The water in the water vat, (the lake) looked as though it was laughing at me, (the lake) looked as though it was mocking me I, I, I

(N.B. 'the lake' is meant to be taken as the impersonal 'it')

(娥穿了娥底短衣, 和娥底短裙.....
水缸里底水, 池好像对娥笑, 池好像讥笑娥唉..... 娥, 娥, 娥.....)

The real cleverness of the satire lies in the wicked and amusing contrast set up by Zhang in this story. Zhang pits the new against the old and manages to make both appear ridiculous.

Even in this, Zhang's earliest known literary work, his skill at characterisation is already apparent. With just a few words Zhang manages to bring Silai and her husband to life as distinct types if not as distinct personalities. Take for instance the omniscient, observing narrator's description of Silai's hair:

Her dishevelled hair covered her forehead making her look very like a beggar child.

(发蓬蓬盖额部大类乞儿。)

The narrator does not mince his words when he interrupts the narrative. He plays an interpretative role, commenting on the characters for the benefit of the reader, but in this first work of Zhang's, gratuitous comment by the narrator is fairly restricted. This comment on the husband, Huang Zunqi, is another example of a comment that the narrator (and Zhang) could not refrain from making:

His brain is ancient.

(盖脑筋既旧。)

Another interesting aspect of this story is the apparent delight Zhang takes in little verbal witticisms. The husband's name for example is Zunqi 遵妻 which means literally "obey one's wife". The crucial joke at the end of the story (which is unfortunately untranslatable) hinges on the fact that in Modern Chinese the character for "it" can be written in several different ways.

Although 'New Poetry' does not qualify as an example of a modern short story, since amongst other failings it is too trivial and lacking a successful and moving ending, it is nonetheless a witty and comical satire.

Comic anecdotes: 'Strange Fetishes' and 'Merry quips'.

The next two pieces written by Zhang also appeared in the magazine Libai liu and Zhang apparently declined payment for them. The first of the two pieces entitled 'Strange Fetishes' 怪癖 is little more than a comical anecdote.¹ The 'plot' (such as it is) deals with a pretty young unmarried woman who comes from a large family in which all her sisters and brothers are married. The narrator, from the outset, attributes the fact that she lacks a mate to her predilection for fetishes. She has certain strange habits, mostly concerned with hygiene, and she also has a petulant temper. She rarely leaves her abode. In a fit of pique at the end of the story she threatens her relatives that she will commit suicide. Zhang seems to be painting a character sketch of an attention-seeking young woman, the 'plot' merely serving to illustrate the woman's character.

A couple of aspects of the style that Zhang uses are of interest. First, in this story we find the first example of Zhang's interest in the scatological. Using rude, juvenile humour that is nonetheless quite amusing Zhang explains that the young woman in question:

.... is also very fond of cleanliness; when the water-carriers bring the water, she only uses the bucket at the front, pouring away the water in the rear bucket. Er xiaojie says that she does this because she is afraid that the water-bearer might have farted.

Secondly the narrator's style is quite chatty and arch; he addresses the reader directly for the most part and throws in the occasional rhetorical remark. An example is this:

But why had she had a lot of fashionable clothes made? The author hasn't yet said

(但是他做了许多时髦的衣服做甚呢。著者还没有说出来.....)

1 Libai liu 158 (22. 4. 1922).

The language used in this story is closer to 'bai hua' than the language used in the first story 'New Poetry'.

The next piece entitled 'Merry quips' 展颜录 is of no literary interest.¹ It is a series of schoolboy jokes, some of which hinge on puns. Some of the jokes show a moderate degree of sophistication, whilst others give way to Zhang's tendency to use the scatological or crude.

'Falling Star': Zhang's first modern short story?

Zhang's next piece, 'Falling Star' 流星, a much longer piece running to some ten pages, is of considerable interest.² It has a claim to be considered the first story to be written by Zhang in the modern short story genre. Having said this, it is necessary to make the qualification that this story does bear a certain resemblance to the Tang dynasty 'chuan qi' 传奇 in the way that the plot is organised.

Its title, 流星, can be interpreted in two ways: first, as 'meteor' or 'shooting star'; and secondly as 'fallen star' (being 'star' as in 'film-star'). This ambiguity of interpretation would appear (from the narrator's remarks in the final paragraph) to have been intended. Perhaps 'Falling Star' would be a good compromise rendition.

The plot flits rather aimlessly from anecdote to anecdote, always threatening to lose but never quite actually succeeding in losing its way. In that the story concentrates almost exclusively on the life-story of Mr. Fang Goupi 方苟丕 (a wicked pun on the words for 'to fart like a dog' 放狗屁 a mild expletive meaning 'to talk rubbish') the plot can be said to be homogeneous.

1 Libai liu 169 (8. 7. 1922)

2 Libai liu 169 (8. 7. 1922)

The bare-bones of the story are as follows: the hero, Mr. Fang Goupi, who is a somewhat unlikely and unheroic hero, is caught up in the struggle to be a 'new' man in a 'new' society that has been transformed by 'new' culture. Fang is a member of the educated class and after completing his primary and secondary education he goes on to attend university. At university, like many of his peers, he is supported by his father who sends him money on a monthly basis. Swayed by the influence of his 'new' learning, Fang is keen to assert independence from his father, but does not know how best to effect a break. His chance comes when his father goes sick and sends an urgent message to his son asking him to return home. Young Fang makes up a feeble excuse for not going to his father's sick-bed, and at the same time tries to break down the Confucian ethics governing filial piety by treating his father as an equal, addressing his father as 'Elder brother'. His father feeling that his son's refusal to return home is "unfilial" writes back to his "little brother" announcing the cutting off of the monthly allowance. This places Mr. Fang Goupi in a very awkward position. On the one hand he wishes to sever his financial ties with his family and establish himself as an independent equal, but on the other hand he cannot afford the university fees and his living expenses without financial assistance from his father. Torn in two, he writes an imploring letter to his father asking for money and at the same time vainly trying to assert his feeling of equality. His father relents and starts to send him his monthly allowance once again.

According to the narrator, everything that Fang does is 'new' (or 'new-fangled'), even down to such basics as urinating, and in consequence he gets a reputation for his 'modern' ways.

He writes 'new poetry' at a phenomenal rate, trotting out large volumes of poetry by the month. Fang makes friends with and marries another 'modern person' 新人物, a young woman called You Chang 尤昌. (Possibly a pun on 犹娼 meaning 'like a prostitute' or 优娼 meaning 'a sing-song girl').

It is at this point in the story that the plot structure falters and almost breaks down. Fang attempts with almost proselytizing zeal to convert an old friend to the 'New-ist' faith, claiming that he will then be saved from the fires of hell, an inevitable consequence of continued interest in 'old-fashioned' ways, according to Fang.

Fang and his wife argue as to who should take whose surname. (According to Chinese tradition the husband and wife retain their different surnames. Only an awareness of the Western custom, whereby a wife adopts her husband's name, would possess someone to act against established tradition). Eventually after discussing many possibilities, they reach a compromise solution whereby they alternate their surnames for two years at a time.

Fang's wife is an active member of the Public Wives' Debating Society 公妻讨论会. (This is a joke at the expense of idealistic aficionados of Communism). During a speech she delivers at one of the Society's meetings she threatens to divorce her husband. Fang imploringly begs his wife not to do this. He gains a short reprieve, but before long his wife takes a concubine and their relationship disintegrates, culminating in divorce and a feeling of mutual animosity. Fang goes downhill after this, ending up a beggar on the streets; You Chang, his ex-wife, marries and divorces a succession of men before finally succumbing to syphilis. At the end of the story, the narrator reasserts control of his story and makes some moralizing comments when discussing the story with a friend who has just read the manuscript.

This story which almost breaks down in the middle is however redeemed by a fairly good opening and a successful conclusion. The reader's interest is maintained because of the subject matter (the relationship between 'new culture' and old culture) and the relative homogeneity of the narrator's focus of attention (the reader wants to know what will happen to Mr. Fang Goupi next).

The relationship between the narrator, the narrator's story

and the reader is very interesting and repays close attention. At the end of the story when the narrator and his friend are discussing the story, both of them refer quite pointedly to the fact that what they are discussing is a piece of fiction, but at the same time they talk as if the story has a 'reality'. Until this point, at the very end of the story when the narrator and his friend discuss the story (the conclusion is very like a reflective epilogue), the narrator has appeared simply as a storyteller (addressing the reader directly in a fairly unobtrusive raconteur-like way). About mid-way through the story there is an occasion when the narrator interrupts the flow of his narrative to ask himself a rhetorical question, which he subsequently proceeds to answer, simultaneously reasserting his direct link with the reader and proceeding with the narrative by recalling earlier events. The rhetorical question is: "How could Mr. Goupi have come to be surnamed You? This too is something that happened at the time of his marriage" (苟丕先生怎么会姓尤呢。这也是他结婚时候的事.....)

The final paragraph of the story is even more interesting as an example of the way in which the narrator takes control of his material, and I translate it in full:

When I had finished this piece of fiction, a friend of mine came to my home. After he had read this story, he sighed: "Ah, Mister Fang Goupi and Mrs. You Chang got into trouble because they misunderstood 'equality'." I said: "That's really a little unfair if you merely limit (your remark) to those two. At present there are some youngsters, who having studied a few new terms, consider themselves to be 'new people'; this kind of person really is a 'Fang Goupi'". Afterwards this friend of mine also asked: "Your story was about Fang Goupi and You Chang, so how was it that it came to be called 'Shooting Star'?" I replied: "Mr. Fang Goupi considered himself to be a star in the New Culture. Later on he wandered about destitute, so I called it 'Falling Star'."

(我这一篇小说做完了，有一个朋友，来到我这儿。看了这一篇小说，叹道：唉，方苟不先先生同尤昌女士，误解了平等，就这真新样就胡闹。我道：你单说他两个人，这真新名词，便自命为新人物。这种人真是方苟不咧。后来我那朋友又向我道：你既说了方苟不和尤昌，怎么题目叫做「流星」呢。我道：方苟不先生自命为新文化中的明星。后来流落了，所以叫做「流星」。)

This paragraph goes a little way towards explaining the standpoint of the narrator and the author. That 'Falling Star' is a satirical attack on petit-bourgeois intellectuals who passed themselves off as 'modern' people imbued with Western culture in 1920s China is quite clear, but what is not clear is exactly where the narrator and author stand in relation to the object of satire. Zhang's position and the position of the narrator of the story are both ambiguous, and the final paragraph of the story simultaneously draws attention to this ambiguity and moves a little way towards clarifying it. Admittedly Zhang's position in relation to the immediate object of satire is clear; he is opposed to shams like Mr. Fang Goupi. Zhang's attitude towards New Culture and its various manifestations is not however made clear in either his first story 'New Poetry' nor in this story 'Falling Star'; it is only later with the publication of such works as the autobiographical reminiscence 'My youthful existence' (1933) that Zhang's embracing of New Culture and his support for the literature that it gave rise to became relatively unequivocal.

That Zhang, when faced with New Culture and its many curious offshoots, should have been somewhat confused does not seem terribly surprising. Taking this into account, it would seem probable that at the time Zhang wrote 'New Poetry' and 'Falling Star', his motive was to reveal the emptiness of certain elements in contemporary society, holding up caricatures for his readers to see, whilst reserving judgement as to the intrinsic merit or demerit of New Culture per se. What would, however, seem clear is that Zhang took a dim view of those members of 1920s (Chinese) society who decided to write free verse. "New Poetry" comes under attack in both Zhang's first story of the same name and also in 'Falling Star'.

Zhang's attitude to his teenage and other early writings.

I think it worthwhile considering at this point Zhang's subsequent attitude towards his teenage writings (and in fact everything that he wrote prior to his so-called 'first work' 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' published in 1929).

Zhang has been fairly consistent in maintaining a dismissive attitude towards his pre-1929 literary activities. In a recent autobiographical outline ¹ Zhang wrote:

I started to write modern fiction in 1928
(I have always been interested in the arts, and I had previously written a few things, but they were not in the realist style).

Even more recently, Shen Chengkuan and her co-writers ² revealed to a much greater degree the extent of Zhang's pre-1929 works:

Under the influence of Lin Qinnan [Lin Shu] and the 'Saturday' school [i.e. Yuanyang hudiepai] Zhang wrote comical and detective stories He published works in the magazines Libai liu, Banyue and Xingqi [《星期》], etc. Apart from fiction, there were also essays, short articles and short pieces that discussed literary questions

In 1933 and 1936, Zhang made passing references to his early writings: in his autobiographical reminiscence 'My youthful existence' (1933) Zhang wrote:

Because I loved to read fiction, I started to write with a few of my fellow students. Everything that we wrote was influenced by Lin Qinnan, the Saturday magazine, and the like. I wrote some comical stories. We also sent some manuscripts to publishers. But to be serious, this cannot any longer be considered my youth, so it seems I ought not to include this in this essay.

¹ Published in Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan 1980:2 (9. 1980) 276-277. Shen Chengkuan in a personal interview, Beijing, 1. 4. 1981 told me that the material contained in this autobiographical account was originally written much earlier, probably in the 1950s.

² See their 'Zhang Tianyi wenxue huodong nianbiao' 张天翼文学活动年表, Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22. 5. 1981) 273

Zhang makes no mention of his detective stories here, and in 1936 he makes specific mention of neither the detective stories nor the comical stories. Writing what Edgar Snow describes as an 'autobiographical sketch supplied by the author'¹, Zhang wrote:

While in middle school I once wrote some puerile and ridiculous stories. In 1925 a Peking newspaper published a piece of mine which was in imitation of the so-called Symbolism. (I had then a funny and absurd notion that literature and action are two separate things. Later I stopped writing). In 1928 I began to train myself to write in the realistic way,

Since 1936 the view has been held in histories of Modern Chinese literature and other similar works that Zhang's first literary publication was 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' published in the magazine run by Lu Xun and Ya Dafu, Benliu 《奔流》 Vol. 1 No. 10, that appeared in April, 1929. Zhang did nothing in the intervening years (1936-1980) to dispel the popular misconception that 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' was the first work of his to be published. Zhang's tacit assent to this fallacious view begs the question: 'Why should he have wished people not to know that he had published comical and detective fiction in his teens whilst still attending Middle School?' What does, however seem clear is that Zhang quite pointedly turned his back on his early writings, indicating a degree of embarrassment with this primary stage of his literary development. By referring to his early stories as "puerile and ridiculous" Zhang showed quite uncompromisingly his dislike for these early works.

The detective fiction.

To continue my chronological discussion of Zhang's early writings, the next few stories that were published using the pseudonym Zhang Wuzheng were all detective stories. These stories, which are written according to a tried and tested

¹ Edgar Snow, comp. and ed., Living China, London, October 1937. Whether Zhang wrote it in English or whether it was written originally in Chinese and subsequently translated is a case in point.

formula, namely that used by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his Sherlock Holmes stories, have a common hero, Xu Changyun 徐常云. Whilst Xu bears a strong resemblance to Sherlock Holmes (only the pipe, violin and smoking jacket are missing), Xu's side-kick Gong Renzhi 龚仁之 bears an even stronger resemblance to the slow-witted Dr. Watson. Gong Renzhi, like Watson, acts as a first-person narrator of the exploits of his friend. None of these Xu Changyun stories show, however, the degree of sophistication to be found in Conan Doyle's stories. The Sherlock Holmes stories were translated by Lin Shu and published about the turn of the century. This established a vogue amongst young Chinese writers to produce detective stories in imitation of Conan Doyle's model. The best-known of the native-born imitations, spawned after the publication of Lin Shu's translations of the Sherlock Holmes stories, were written by Cheng Xiaoqing 程小青 and his detective hero was called Huo Sang 霍桑, "the Chinese Sherlock Holmes".¹

All Zhang's Xu Changyun stories are much of a muchness. They vary in length and a little in complexity but the formula is uniform in the main: Xu Changyun uses his deductive powers to solve a forensic riddle and reveal a villain. His friend and assistant Gong Renzhi acts as narrator, sounding-board and fan club all rolled into one. Some of the stock characteristics that one associates with Sherlock Holmes are also characteristics of Xu Changyun. In a Holmesian way, Xu Changyun will tell his agitated visitor to repeat his story slowly from the beginning, sometimes giving the visitor a cup of tea and suggesting that he take his time to get his breath back before recounting his story from the beginning. This is of course an authorial device to allow the story to be told or repeated in its complete form for the benefit of the reader. Xu Changyun like Holmes occasionally patronises the Watson-like Gong Renzhi by passing some remark like:

¹ cf. E. Perry Link, Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1981) 147: "In a survey of novels published in Shanghai during the year of 1907, including both translations and creations, detective stories outnumbered all other kinds Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing's [Cheng Xiaoqing] Cases Investigated by the Chinese Sherlock Holmes, Huo Sang (《中国福尔摩斯霍桑探案》) was a staple of popular fiction in the 1910s."

"Renzhi, you really are making progress." Another characteristic that reminds one of Holmes is Xu Changyun's apparent nonchalance and the way in which he occasionally suddenly asks a sharp, direct and penetrating question. He, like Holmes, is an expert on handwriting and footprints.

It is interesting to see the degree to which Zhang's Xu Changyun stories are Westernized and the degree to which they are imbued with a Chinese flavour. Perry Link has already pointed out that the early twentieth century Chinese detective story has Chinese as well as Western precursors:

The popularity of Sherlock Holmes during the early 20th century also draws upon the Ch'ing [Qing] tradition of "public case" (kung-an) [gongan 公案] fiction such as The Cases of Judge Shih (Shih kung-an) [Shi gongan] and The Cases of Judge P'eng (P'eng kung-an) [Peng gongan] ¹

The Xu Changyun stories manage to combine vestiges of their origins in traditional vernacular fiction with reference to the telephone and revolvers which help to give the stories a thoroughly modern stamp.

The first of these Xu Changyun stories entitled 'The Youthful Secretary' 少年书记 appeared towards the end of July 1922. ² The plot is not elaborate and involves a case of fraud perpetrated by letter. Xu uncovers the villain by a combination of deductive logic and analysis of handwriting. All the evidence at first points to the young secretary of the title, but this is what the real villain hopes people will think. This stacking of the evidence in one particular direction and the springing of a surprise at the end is a characteristic common to much detective fiction.

The next story 'Is it a man, or is it a ghost?' 人耶鬼耶 is a longer, more intricate story. ³ Apart from the bare bones

1 E. Perry Link, Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies, 138.

2 Banyue 1:22 (24. 7. 1922) 8 pages.

3 Xingqi 23 (6. 8. 1922) 16 pages.

of the forensic drama there are also descriptive passages, a luxury that Zhang has not indulged in previously. The final outcome lacks the frisson of a conventional detective story because there are no real villains to be unmasked. There are just a couple of brothers faking up ghostly occurrences in the hope that they will force their neighbour to leave his home. Their motive is the desire to search for buried treasure they know to be hidden somewhere in the grounds of the house they share with their neighbour. Xu quickly sees through the ghostly antics and contrives a way to catch the brothers out. The story is jolly enough but not exceptional in any way.

Zhang's next publication was a very short article about the state of detective fiction in China at that time.¹ He bemoans monotony of themes and the lack of imagination shown by detective fictionists. According to Zhang there were at this time (September 1922) almost no home-produced plots, contemporary writers of detective fiction relying on the foreign plot-stock to produce variations on or mere translations of original stories. Zhang declares that those writers who do create their own original stories tend to be schoolboys like himself.

In edition No.31 of Xingqi Zhang wrote eight short pieces.² At best these are anecdotes; some of them deal with events and things to be seen around Hangzhou. These short sketches add very little to what can be gleaned elsewhere of Zhang's life and his creative development, but do add a little local colour and humanity to the picture of Zhang as a maturing teenager.

'The Empty Room' 空室, the next story by Zhang to be published, is another detective story with Xu Changyun once more featuring as the master detective and Gong Renzhi as his narrating assistant.³ This story is in one way at least more adventurous and less conventional than the stories that precede it. The story ends on a note of suspense, leaving the reader unclear as to the exact identity of the murderer.

1 'The Week's Discussion' 星期谈话会, Xingqi 28 (10. 9. 1922) 2 pages.

2 'The Week's Discussion' 星期谈话会, Xingqi 31 (1. 10. 1922) 6 pages.

3 Xingqi 32 (8. 10. 1922) 14 pages.

The story opens with a long introductory section that dictates the mood for the ensuing plot. The narrator discusses in a philosophical way the relationships between the criminal world, the police world and the newspaper world.¹

The story proper begins when a police inspector comes to visit Xu Changyun, and asks for his assistance with an investigation. Apparently a clever murder has been committed; no trace of the murderer's method has been left on the corpse. Xu and Gong go to the empty room of the title and snoop about. Xu manages to fathom how the crime was committed but he does not succeed in identifying the villain. The two friends return home, and Xu in a Holmes-like way paces up and down all night, pondering the case, unable to sleep.

The next day, a mysterious youthful visitor comes to see Xu and Gong. This visitor helps to fill in most of the gaps in the background which assists Xu, Gong and the reader to elucidate the more inexplicable aspects of the case. It turns out that a young detective has been working undercover to assassinate a traitorous high official. Zhang seems to have been trying to give this story a pseudo-historical flavour.² The desire to cloak the identity of the young detective in secrecy adds to the mystery and appeal of the story. Gong, the usually omniscient narrator trails off at the end saying that the murderer's name was probably This leaves the reader to draw his/her own conclusion.

1 These social issues stated at the beginning are later recalled in the main body of the story. In many ways, the tale is an illustration of the point made in the introductory section. Both the introduction and the story give rise to a rather cynical attitude towards the police force, highlighting its inefficiency and incompetence. This sort of anti-police attitude which of course justifies the necessity for private detectives can also be found in the stories 'Steel Anchor Seal' 铁锚印 and 'Jade Jug' 玉壶.

2 There were examples of political assassinations in the aftermath of the May Fourth incident but whether Zhang had a particular assassination in mind or whether he was simply using an account he had read in a newspaper to make a story is not clear. The inclusion of contemporary historical material in fictional works was popular in works published about the turn of the century. It seems quite possible that Zhang was imitating the vogue established by writers of 'heimu xiaoshuo' 黑幕小说.

Zhang's next publication appeared in the section of Xingqi No.33 (15. 10. 1922) entitled 'Random Thoughts on Fiction'

小说杂谈。 Zhang's contribution consists of three short entries in which he comments on three different types of fiction. The kinds of fiction that he isolates for analysis are:

i) heartbreak stories 哀情小说 ; ii) comical stories 滑稽小说 ; and iii) detective stories 侦探小说 .

These would seem to have been the sorts of stories that he was most interested in at this time. At the time Zhang wrote this piece, 15 October 1922, he had not yet published any "heartbreak stories" but he subsequently published a few stories, 'Cut to the Quick'¹ and 'Under the Moon'², that can be said to fall into this category.

Zhang begins with the thesis that all fiction has its strengths. "I hold that all fiction, no matter what kind, has its good points". ("我说无论什么小说, 都有益处"). This calls to mind Zhang's middle school headmaster's purported remark that all fiction no matter what is harmful. In a tongue-in-cheek way Zhang takes each category of story in turn and points out strengths, weaknesses and possible pitfalls.

With regard to comical stories Zhang warns against excessive deliberate use of "misunderstanding" 误 , "stupidity" 呆 , and "mischievousness" 顽皮 .

Returning to a more serious vein, Zhang points out some of the possible failings of detective fiction. According to Zhang, the first and most disastrous pitfall is to write a résumé of the plot in which the identity of the villain is revealed. Secondly, he points out that care must be taken with the cover design because this too can let the cat out of the bag. Thirdly, yet another possible give-away is the title of the book. Finally, Zhang illustrates his three points with an example of a book that he has come across which combines all three failings:

1 Xingqi 38 (19. 11. 1922) 4 pages.

2 Banyue 2:22 (28. 7. 1923) 4 pages.

Previously I came across a detective novel called Hot Daughter. On the cover there was a picture of a girl, clutching a long knife. The résumé said that there was an old man who was stabbed, and that he had one daughter and one son. I don't need to tell you who the murderer was.

(我从前看见一部侦探小说,叫做「辣女儿」。封面画是一个女子,拿着一柄长刀。内容说是一个老人被刺,他有一女一子。我也不必说出凶手是谁。)

Zhang avoids making reference to his own literary practice in this article.

Zhang next published another Xu Changyun story, entitled 'Last Will and Testament' 遗嘱.¹ This story begins somewhat tangentially and chattily with Gong Renzhi dropping the names of recent cases that he and Xu Changyun have been engaged upon, but he does not go into details. This has the illusory effect of adding depth to the story for it suggests to the reader that behind the surface story there are a host of Xu Changyun stories. Zhang makes use of another clever technique which adds spice to the story for the reader: Gong wrote up the case against his friend's strictest instructions and the first draft of the manuscript was burnt on the fire by an angry Xu. Gong avoids arousing his friend's wrath a second time by changing the names of the participants. This has the effect of making the reader feel he is in receipt of privileged information.

Gong Renzhi establishes his relationship with his readership by addressing them directly thus: "But before beginning my account, there are a few words that I would first like to address to my readers." Similar phrases appear in traditional vernacular novels such as The Water Margin 《水浒传》, Journey to the West 《西游记》, etc. Consider, for instance, this example from the first page of A Record of Lao Can's Travels

¹ Xingqi 34 (22. 10. 1922) 12 pages.

《老残游记》，of the narrator addressing the reader directly: "And what do you think; could he possibly have some spare capital to give to his son to use?" (你想，可有馀资给他儿子应用呢?)

Later in the story, Gong Renzhi holds a dramatised imaginary conversation with the reader:

"He Guang came walking in. Who was this fellow He Guang? Wait while I introduce him to my readers. He is actually a young detective".

(何广走了进来。这何广是什么人呢。待我来介绍给读者诸君。他原来是一个少年侦探。)

Zhang has very quickly learnt the importance in the short story of establishing a meaningful relationship between the narrator and the reader and of drawing the reader into the story.

The plot of 'Last Will and Testament' which is occasionally untidy unfolds thus: He Guang, a young detective friend of Xu Changyun suddenly arrives with news of a mysterious "suicide" and a murder. Young He Guang recounts the circumstances of the tragedies for the benefit of Xu, Gong and the reader. Xu, Gong and He subsequently go to the scene of the crimes and Xu conducts some interviews and analyses footprints which help him eventually to solve the mystery. Just as the case is proving most interesting and perplexing, Xu sends Gong Renzhi home and goes off on his own. In this way, the reader loses the first-hand observer of Xu's actions and this has three consequences; an element of suspense is introduced, a smooth progress to a climax is averted, and the subsequent revelations at the end of the story occasion amazement. On returning home, Renzhi ponders the events of the morning; this serves as a chance for recapitulation for the reader.

After a while Xu returns home and declares that the case is wrapped up. Xu and Gong await the arrival of expected visitors who dutifully appear. The whole scenario becomes increasingly unlikely. At the last moment new and astonishing

information is drawn to the reader's attention by Xu. Apparently the "suicide" and murder were the result of an illicit love-tangle involving a secretary and a concubine. The withholding of a large body of information crucial to the solving of the mystery until the last gasp of the story is not very satisfactory from the reader's point of view. The reader is robbed of a chance to pit his/her wits.

It is worth noting that though Gong Renzhi is the narrator of the story proper, He Guang acts as a kind of internal first-person narrator when he recounts at some length the circumstances of the mysterious deaths. Since Gong's central narrative role is for a time usurped by He Guang, it is all the more important and understandable that Zhang should have made Gong quite assertive in his role as narrator early on in the story.

Another clever technique utilised by Zhang was to make Xu Changyun ask a question of He Guang that most readers probably have been dying to pose themselves. This has the effect of giving the reader a sense of satisfaction since he/she is able to identify with the hero of the story and thus share a little of his "glory".

Finally, in some spare space after the end of the text, the editor of Xingqi, Bao Tianxiao 包天笑 adds some avuncular words of advice to Mr. Wuzheng 无诤先生 (this is the way he addresses Zhang). He expresses dissatisfaction with one unrealistic aspect of this story and hopes that Zhang will be more careful in future about tying up loose ends. This criticism, though possibly a little patronising in tone, is well-founded. According to Zhang ¹ one of his fellow middle school pupils who has been identified as the poet Dai Wangshu, ² took him to task for technical errors in his detective stories. In answer to Dai's criticism, Zhang pleaded youth and inexperience as the reasons for his lack of expertise.

1 'Random thoughts on fiction' 小说杂谈, Xingqi 39 (26. 11. 1922).

2 See Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22.5.1981)123.

'Cut to the Quick': experimenting with a new genre.

Zhang's next work could be classified as an example of the "heartbreak story", a category that he discussed in an earlier critical review. This is a dull and uninteresting story. There is an off-puttingly self-indulgent first-person narrator. The narrator recounts his life as a school secretary, describing his unending round of copying up and running off copies of lecture notes for teachers and students for which he is paid a pittance. The title of this story 'Ku zhong' 苦衷¹ means literally "difficulties that one is reluctant to discuss or mention"; this seems to be a comical contradiction of the content and narrative method of the story. The narrator seems only too keen to spin his yarn.

It is difficult to know what point the story is trying to make. The self-indulgent narrative technique has the effect of making it difficult for the reader to decide who is more contemptible, the oppressed school secretary or his oppressors, the school students, teachers and headmaster who are constantly making demands upon his time and services and expressing little or no gratitude in return. Just at the moment when one thinks that the narrator is about to take a principled and determined stand on pay by threatening the headmaster with resignation, he disappoints the reader by backing down. Having treated the reader to an anticlimax, the secretary/narrator finally in the last paragraph lamely comforts himself with the thought that he is not alone; all school secretaries are as pitiful as himself.

More detective fiction.

Zhang's next story, entitled 'Jade Jug' 玉壺 is another Xu Changyun story.² This story, like 'Empty Room' also draws attention to police incompetence. A detective in the police force called Wen Li 文礼 has apparently won himself a reputation as a result of cracking one case. Feeling very proud of himself, he calls on Xu who presses him to tell the story of how he solved the mystery of the missing jade jug. Wen Li like

¹ Xingqi 38 (19. 11. 1922) 4 pages.

² Xingqi 39 (26. 22. 1922) 12 pages.

He Guang in 'Last Will and Testament' takes over the narration from Gong Renzhi. As before Zhang is very careful to arrange an opportunity for Gong to assert his presence and remind the reader of his function as "primary" narrator. This is achieved thus: when Wen Li has finished his story, Gong politely gives him a cigarette and asks him: "Wen, old chap, who is this Tao Gang?" Wen Li has forgotten during the course of his narration to explain the identity of Tao Gang the person who has lost the jug. This gives Gong an opportunity to come into his own. The repartee between the two men sheds an intriguing light on Zhang's attitude towards the relationship between fact and fiction as well as his attitude towards the narrative process. Wen Li answers: "Forgive me, how could I possibly be as good as you (Gong Renzhi) at putting across a story (lit. "making fiction")?" It is difficult to understand why Zhang chose to make Wen Li say "making fiction" (做小说) rather than "tell a story" (讲故事), but be that as it may, the remark reveals an attitude towards Gong Renzhi's activity as narrator and recorder of Xu Changyun's cases. The implication is that Gong makes fiction out of fact for the benefit of the reading public. If this were the only isolated example of consideration of this subject, it would hardly be worthy of comment, but Zhang does on several occasions in his early stories make reference to this subject. In the story 'Empty Room', for instance, the curious youthful detective who came to visit Xu and Gong and reveal the background to the case, remarked: "When I speak, I am sure to imitate the method used by novelists. This is because this business actually bears some similarities to fiction". Xu Changyun replies: "Tell your story then (lit. "make fiction")". This further complicates the impression that can be gained of Zhang's attitude towards his craft for here is a character in one of his stories who declares that what he is about to say bears all the marks of fiction. In detective short stories it would usually seem to be the objective of the author and his first person narrator (if there is one) to convince the reader of the plausibility and credibility of the story that is being told. On the surface at least Zhang seems to be going against convention and making a virtue of the fictional appearance of his stories.

Wen Li's remark seems rather defensive (and almost slightly sneering), apparently implying that Gong Renzhi is a professional writer who knows how to order his material to create a literary effect. The anonymous youthful detective's remark on the other hand seemingly implies that fact is sometimes equally as strange as fiction. Xu Changyun's reply helps to keep the line between fact and fiction indistinct. All of these references to fiction serve to draw attention to the story teller's craft, suggesting that Zhang felt this subject to be worthy of consideration in his stories.

This is not Zhang's final reference to the relationship between fact and fiction and the narrative process, and I shall return to this subject as occasion demands.

To return once more to the story 'Jade Jug', Wen Li tells his story to Xu and Gong and is astonished to be told by Xu that he has arrested the wrong man. Wen Li naturally demands proof of Xu's assertion and they go to the scene of the crime to investigate. The way in which the evidence is pointedly stacked against the next-door neighbour makes the robbery of the jug look like a put-up job. In good Holmesian fashion, Xu interviews the victim and snoops about with his magnifying glass. Finally Xu, Gong and Wen Li lie in ambush for the crook, who turns out to be none other than the owner of the "lost" jug, disguised as an old man. His motive for the crime is the arrest and subsequent removal of his neighbour who alone knows him to be a criminal. This aspect of the plot is not altogether satisfactory and Zhang seems conscious of this for he has Wen Li ask Xu Changyun why the neighbour should have been embarrassed when confronted with his ostensible crime. In an attempt to tie up this loose end, Xu replies that this is the result of psychology; when the neighbour heard that "Tao Gang had lost something, he became afraid of everyone no matter whom".

Zhang's next story entitled 'Bad Dream' 恶梦 appeared in the magazine Banyue on 16 May 1923 after an interval of almost six months when no work by Zhang is known to have been

published.¹ This story which deals with a political subject calls to mind the spirit of the May 4th Movement. It is most interesting for the language in which it is written and also its conclusion. The language Zhang uses in this story is much closer to Classical Chinese than the language used in the preceding few stories. The sentences tend to be terse; the whole story is quite short. The quality of the prose is rather purple with many poetic-sounding adjectives and adverbs that are formed by the duplication of characters, such as 'xiong xiong ran' 熊熊然 ('flaming'), 'ji ji' 岌岌 ('precarious'), 'cen cen' 滃滃 ('steaming'), 'gu gu' 汨汨 ('gurgling'), 'xu xu' 絮絮 ('long-winded'), etc.

The story is passed off as a dream by the first-person narrator; this seems to be utilised as a method of distancing the content of the story from the author/narrator. The story begins with a descriptive section showing how the dream came about. During the course of this introductory paragraph the first person narrator (who incidentally does not reveal his precise identity throughout the piece) suddenly addresses the reader directly: "I shall write down the events of that time and reveal them to the reader".

The narrator, who would appear to be a student, proceeds to tell the events of his dream. The point of the story of the dream is to analyse various reactions to the events that gave rise to the May 4th Movement.² Once more Zhang seems to be

¹ Banyue 2:17 (16. 5. 1923) 3 pages.

A translation of this story appears in Appendix D.

² Zhang's story was one of several stories published to commemorate National Humiliation Day [May 9] in Banyue 2:17 (16. 5. 1923). For the historical background, see Chow Tse-tsung [Zhou Zezong], The May Fourth Movement, 130-131: "In Nanking [Nanjing], students from more than two dozen schools and members of many professional educational organizations held a memorial meeting on National Humiliation Day (May 9) [1919] with about ten thousand people present Street speechmaking groups, a Save China Corps, and a Save China Fund were also established. Following a similar action in Tsinan [Jinan] and Shanghai on May 9, merchants in Nanking started a boycott against Japanese goods on May 11."

deliberately muddling reality and unreality, fact and fiction; by dressing up fact in a fictional form was Zhang aiming to sharpen his readers' awareness of historical events? I suspect that Zhang chose the vehicle of a dream to contain this material and chose a flowery language in which to have the story narrated for two reasons: first, to use literary techniques to increase the effectiveness of the socio-political points that he wished to make; and secondly, to protect himself as author from being too closely associated with the views contained in the story.

Towards the end of the piece, the narrator suddenly declares, "I woke, so it was only a dream". He then goes on: "When I looked at the corners of my eyes, there were still traces of tears; the sound of moaning was faintly audible, and I could not help feeling terrified. So I got up and put on my clothes, and went to tell Wuzheng about it, saying that this could be used to write a story (lit. make fiction)". Having the narrator refer to Zhang the author in the last line of the story adds considerable dynamic subtlety to what would otherwise be a banal and trivial story. The impression that this reference to Zhang gives is that Zhang is deliberately disowning responsibility for the story of his "friend", the narrator, as though merely taking credit for writing up the story as told to him. It must be remembered that the practice of disclaiming authorship is a common traditional practice to be found in much Chinese literature (e.g. the late Qing novel).

There are, however, problems with such an interpretation; the fact that the story is written in a highly stylized literary language dispels the idea that Zhang was merely acting as a penman writing up a story as it was recounted to him. Zhang has taken up the bones of the story and manipulated them artistically to his own ends, introducing a first-person narrator who has a personality but no name, and finally in the last line of the story differentiating himself from this narrator, and asserting himself as a distinct personality with the function of being ear to the people.

Another detective story: 'Steel Anchor Seal'.

Zhang's next story, another Xu Changyun story, called 'Steel Anchor Seal' appeared in Banyue in June 1923.¹ From two points of view this story is interesting. First, the plot is made more complex by the deliberate inclusion of irrelevant extraneous material. Secondly, Zhang seems to take a moral stand in this story at odds with conventional morality.

The story begins quite slowly and inconsequentially. Xu and Gong go out for an early morning pleasure trip on West Lake. Upon their return home they discover that a visitor has called in their absence. After a while this visitor, Wu Ming 吴明,² a young detective, comes to visit them once again. Confronted with a baffling case, Wu Ming has come to seek Xu Changyun's advice. Someone has taken a pot-shot at Wu Ming's friend Ren Siwen 任司文. The day before the attempt on his life, Ren Siwen had received an anonymous threatening letter promising revenge for something that had happened five years earlier. The letter had been stamped with an unusual anchor-shaped seal.

Xu and his companions go to the scene of the crime to investigate and then proceed to visit Ren Siwen in hospital. Xu is keen to know where Ren Siwen was five years earlier. It turns out that five years earlier he had not gone away at all, living as he was in his native Hangzhou. Xu also wants to trace all of Ren's known friends. Ren tells him the names and addresses of his six closest friends. Xu, Gong and Wu Ming split up to investigate two of these each.

Prior to their investigations and the hospital visit, Xu had already discovered the method of entry into Ren Siwen's house. The would-be killer had made use of a rope and telegraph pole to scale the garden wall. Ren Siwen said that he had not recognised his assailant and that he had appeared to him as a dark shadow with very agile movements.

1 Banyue 2:19 (14. 6. 1923) 16 pages.

2 Perhaps a pun on 吴明.

After the three men have carried out their investigations into Ren Siwen's friends, Xu reveals that he has cracked the case and that they can apprehend the villain after supper. After eating, the three men go to wait outside a strange house for the would-be assassin to appear. After a long wait a postman finally arrives at the house, but Xu does not make a move. Only after three shots have been fired and the postman hurries out does Xu grab him. The murderer who is dressed as a postman fills in the background to the story. Apparently his motive for murder is a running feud between himself and an old bandit mate whom he has just shot.

Only after the murderer has been taken away does Xu reveal how he solved the riddle and how he knew where to catch the criminal. Xu had deduced that the would-be assassin had seen Ren Siwen and his intended victim in a group and had somehow muddled their addresses. Whilst the other two had been investigating Ren Siwen's friends, Xu had gone back to the hospital to ask Ren Siwen whom he had been with on the previous day. In this way Xu deduced whose house to stake out in order to catch the would-be assassin. To ensure that the "murderer" would know that he had shot at the wrong man, Xu had written an article for the evening paper naming Ren Siwen as the victim of the attack.

The plot is interesting because of the introduction of irrelevant extraneous material which adds to the complexity of the plot and makes the mystery more difficult to analyse for the reader.¹ Examples of this are the title of the story 'Steel Anchor Seal' which refers to an unusual seal stamped on the threatening letter sent to Ren Siwen, a detail which adds nothing to the plot. More irrelevant padding is added when the three sleuths collect information about the friends of Ren Siwen.

1 This would seem to be part of a deliberate policy by Zhang to introduce red herrings that would make his plots less transparent - the corollary of the failing he mentions in one of his earlier critical articles dealing with the detective story. ('Random thoughts on fiction' 小说杂谈 in Xingqi 33).

Diversions such as these all serve to make the plot of the story appear more complex than it really is.

At the climax of the action, Xu waits until the would-be assassin has shot dead his intended victim before pouncing on him. That the plot should be worked out in this way makes one wonder whether Zhang as author and manipulator of his material was not taking a moral stance on revenge and condoning this sort of murderous tit-for-tat settling of old gangland scores. This point cannot, however, be pressed home with certainty as it could be argued that Xu was uncertain of the precise identity of the villain before he made his move to kill his old adversary.

Though this is one of the better, more exciting Xu Changyun stories, it does nevertheless lack incisiveness and the plot is unnecessarily cluttered with details. The plot also strikes as being fragile in that Xu's deductive reasoning and subsequent assumption that the attack on Ren Siwen was a mistake is backed up by very little hard fact, but this is unlikely to have worried the majority of readers eager to see the master detective triumph once more.

'Under the Moon': an experiment with flashbacks and authorial distancing.

The next story by Zhang entitled 'Under the Moon' A T is a "heartbreak" story.¹ This story is more clearly moralistic than the earlier "heartbreak" story 'Bad Dream'. The various illustrations of a moral point about the need for filial piety suggest that Zhang was intending to persuade his readers of the correctness of one particular viewpoint. This is not to say that Zhang's didacticism is bare-faced. Subtlety and sophistication are added by the introduction of a curious twist at the end of the story.

'Under the Moon' begins with a 2 a.m. city scene. A young man in his late twenties is observed by the narrator standing under a moonlit tree in a park. The plot, such as it is, revolves around the childhood memories of this young man.

¹ Banyue 2:22 (28. 7. 1923) 4 pages.

The opening is not altogether successful. The introductory descriptive passage is quite laboured and is not aided by the fact that the reader is informed twice that it is 2 o'clock in the morning: "Just then the sound of a clock could be heard striking twice, clang, clang, which told those who were listening, that the time was now 2 o'clock".

The narrative technique used in this story is worthy of comment. Zhang, unusually for him, combines an impersonal narrator, the shadowy other figure observing the young man in the park, with a highly personalised third-person respondent whose strong feelings and memories are recorded with almost "first-hand" understanding. Unfortunately this bold experiment jars and strikes as being unconvincing.

The several strange nocturnal occurrences recorded by the narrator and experienced by the young man who is the centre of interest of the story trigger off memories in the young man's mind. The first of these occurrences is a black crow flying to its nest to feed its chicks — a very curious thing to happen in the middle of the night. As if this were not enough to remind the young man of his childhood and his relationship with his mother, the train of thought is hammered home when the sound of a child crying and then being comforted by its mother is heard. This method of orchestrating events to trigger off a train of memories by what would appear to be a psychological association of ideas is clumsy if carried out in an unsubtle way as Zhang does here. Whilst the use of flashbacks in this story marks a development in literary technique, this advance is dissipated by the use of clumsy plot devices.

Having set the young man thinking about his childhood, the flow of childhood memories then continues unabated, one memory following fast upon the heels of another. The young man recalls how his father died when he was eight. On his death-bed, the father expressed the wish that his son should receive a good education. His widowed mother did her utmost to carry out the father's wishes. In spite of his mother's kindness and devotion, the young man is led on by others to reject her. With its theme of filial impiety, this story looks forward to 'Dream lasting Three

and a Half Days', Zhang's first realistic story, which deals with an educated young man's relationship with his old parents. In 'Under the Moon', Zhang is using a far less realistic method and his moral purpose is in consequence far more transparent.

As this story develops, it becomes less and less realistic. Gripped by remorse, the young man has a vision of his mother coming to him (as he stands in the moonlight in the park). He begs his mother for forgiveness for his unfilial behaviour and in his fantasy he hears his mother answer his begs for forgiveness: "What need have you to weep? All you need to do is to be capable of regret, and then I will be able to forgive you." The use of a vision is very curious and combined with the themes of guilt, remorse and forgiveness, helps to lend this story a religious quality.

In the last two lines of the story, Zhang avoids a conventional ending by introducing a deflationary twist to the dénouement. When the young man makes a move to embrace the vision of his mother, once more imploring her forgiveness, he puts his arms round a void and receives no response to his entreaties. This dissolving of the fantasy in the last line of the story has the effect of implying a return to reality, a reality in which the young man's mother does not exist and by extension the need for the young man to seek the forgiveness of his mother and suffer remorse is called into question.

The dissolution of the vision also has the effect of making the reader wonder what Zhang's real feelings about filial piety and respect for parents were. The negating of the vision can also be seen as a method of keeping his authorial self covered, a side-stepping of the possibility of being called to task for advocating a mode of behaviour that was not widely accepted at this time. The use of a shadowy narrator standing in the sidelines in the moonlight under the tree in the park, using the third person to recount the young man's actions, thoughts and words, tends also to suggest a deliberate policy of distancing on the part of the author/narrator in this story.

Zhang's last two detective stories: 'The Axe' and 'X'.

Zhang's next story 'The Axe' is another of the Xu Changyun stories.¹ 'The Axe' appeared in the Shanghai magazine Zhentan shijie 《偵探世界》 in November 1923. This is by no means Zhang's most interesting or exciting detective story. The plot is relatively simple and the action slow-moving. A child disappears and Xu and Gong go to investigate. Whilst they are at the scene of the disappearance, news comes that the mother of the child has just received an anonymous letter. This letter makes no ransom demand and urges the mother not to worry, promising that the child will be returned sooner or later. The mystery is eventually solved when Xu discovers the child with his supposedly dead father hidden in an underground room.

Once more Gong Renzhi is the first-person narrator. But on this occasion Gong is not present at the time when the case is finally cracked. Just before Xu discovers the father and son hiding in the underground room, Gong develops a headache and hurries off home. This gives Xu the chance to reveal the dénouement of the case upon his return home to the amazement of Gong. The explanations of why the father faked his disappearance six years earlier, never letting the secret out even to his family, are hard to accept. The father who is an old schoolmate of Xu and Gong was apparently involved in a gangland feud, and a member of the gang had sworn to kill him.

The story hints at a world of violence, where feuds, revenge, and vendettas are commonplace, but these do not form the forefront of the story and the ponderous mechanics of the plot make the story seem implausible.

Zhang's next story entitled 'X' is the last of his Xu Changyun stories and appeared in December 1923.² It is one of Zhang's more successful detective stories and combines an interesting plot with an interesting style. The story is divided into two units. The first unit fills in the background to the case and

¹ Zhentan shijie 13 (1. 11. 1923) 11 pages. It appears translated in Appendix D.

² Banyue 3:6 (8. 12. 1923) 18 pages.

recounts the events that have occurred prior to Xu's involvement in the case. The fact that Xu and Gong play no part in the first unit makes this story distinctive. The first unit appears as a factual account, often relying on recorded conversations, that is recounted by an impersonal, unobtrusive narrator. (If this narrator is in fact meant to be Gong Renzhi, then Gong does nothing to make his identity known to the reader.) When the second unit begins however, Gong's presence is instantly felt: "Gong Renzhi said (or says)" (龚仁之道....)

The impersonal, unobtrusive narrator of the first unit does occasionally make his anonymous presence felt as when he comments on the veracity or likelihood of various theories and rumours about X: "Some people say, that fellow X wants to lay his hands on Tongchao's fortune, so he is acting furtively like this. All these remarks are falsehoods" It is rare in Zhang's early stories for a narrator to adopt this omniscient tone; the narrator in 'Under the Moon' is an important exception.

The story opens with a dramatised conversation between Ji Tongchao 季同超 and a mysterious man called X who comes to apply to be his secretary. X declares that he was kept prisoner in a room for years and years since early childhood and has only just been released. He knows neither his name, nor the identity of his parents, nor the identity of his captors. Ji Tongchao who is an industrial magnate and important figure in local society takes him on. The curious story about his mysterious secretary is subsequently recorded in the newspapers. X works for several months for Ji, but strange things then start to happen. For instance, X becomes terrified when he finds an old matchbox in his employer's study. On a subsequent occasion X is found in a river almost drowned and claims that a negro tried to kill him. Finally a body is found, with the face unrecognisable, but wearing X's clothes. One finger is missing from the body and is found elsewhere. The investigating detective Wang Chonghe 汪充和 declares that the body is X and that he committed suicide whilst in a state of shock.

It is at this point that Xu and Gong enter the picture as the second half of the story begins to be unfolded by Gong Renzhi. Xu quickly fathoms the mystery, but keeps mum about what he has deduced. Much to the surprise and disbelief of Wang Ghonghe, Xu declares that the dead body is not X after all. Xu makes some hints about the solution of the case but Gong and Wang are merely puzzled. Finally Xu reveals the solution to the mystery. Eight years earlier the existence of a mysterious organisation with twenty-five influential members had been discovered, but the membership list was nowhere to be found. X found the matchbox where the membership list was supposed to be hidden whilst working in his employer's house. Finding that the list was not inside the matchbox, X feared that he would be assassinated for failing in his mission to find the list and destroy it. Hoping to put his pursuers off his scent, X killed someone and dressed him in his own clothes, thinking thereby to trick his pursuers into believing him to be dead. After the intricacies of the case have been revealed, Xu, Gong and Wang lie in wait for X and he eventually falls into their hands.

Tying the loose ends left at the end of the story even more neatly, Gong adds a postscript at the end of the story: "After this case had been wound up, the government suddenly sent out secret detectives, who arrested 25 people, because they already possessed the list of names. All 25 of these people were famous figures".¹

¹ Zhang may have been referring obliquely to the Anfu Club whose history has been described by Chow Tse-tung in The May Fourth Movement, 78: "When the parliament came into being in the autumn [of 1918], more than 330 of the 430 parliamentary members were under obligation to Hsü [Xu Shuzheng]. Among such members Wang I-t'ang [Wang Yitang], Speaker of the House, was the leader, and his residence on Anfu Street became the meeting place for this group of parliamentarians, hence the name Anfu Club. It was reported that the club paid from 300 to 800 yuan per month to any member of Parliament who would record his name as a member The whole organization was under the immediate control of Hsü Shu-cheng who was a very shrewd and able young general, Through Ts'ao Ju-lin [Cao Rulin] and certain of his intimates, the club maintained close relations with the Japanese. China's President Hsü Shih-ch'ang [Xu Shichang] and some of the military men around him came to feel quite uneasy about this powerful organization The club was disbanded by the government on August 3, 1920,"

The plot combines subtlety, sophistication and neatness with an interesting narrative method. The breaking of the story into two parts with Xu and Gong only appearing in the second part was a radical and adventurous experimental step for Zhang to take.

Zhang's descriptive powers are more noteworthy in this story than in the few examples of description to be found in the foregoing works. Take for example this passage:

He suddenly looked flustered, his whole body shook. His pale face went slightly red. His heart went pitter-patter without stopping. He was also gasping for breath. His whole attention was riveted on this matchbox.

(他忽然神色慌张,全身都颤了。惨白的脸上,微现红色,心怦怦跳个不停。气也喘了。他全神都注在这火柴盒。)

This story 'X' which appeared in December, 1923 marks the end of Zhang's teenage literary output (as far as is known at present). For the next three years (until December, 1926) no literary works by Zhang were published.

Withdrawal from the commercial story market (1924-1926)

Biographical data for these intervening years tell us that Zhang moved to Shanghai after leaving secondary school in the summer of 1924. In the autumn he passed the entrance examination to the Shanghai Art College 上海美术专科学校 where he studied for almost a year. Whilst in Shanghai, he corresponded with a former fellow student from his secondary school, expressing indignation at the educational and cultural conditions under the warlord government at that time.¹ This fellow student was Zhou Songdi 周颂棣. Also while in Shanghai, Zhang is supposed to have written some fiction that

¹ See Shen Chengkuan et al., 'Zhang Tianyi wenxue huodong nianbiao' Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22. 5. 1981) 273; and Zhou Songdi, 'Wo he Tianyi xiangchu de rizi' 我和天翼相处的日子, Huacheng 1981:2 (5. 1981) 93-98.

ridiculed important figures who put on the airs of gentlemen as being no better than a flock of silly geese.¹

In the following autumn (1925) Zhang gave up his course at art college because of high fees and unsatisfactory teaching and moved to Beijing where he stayed with his second eldest sister. During this time (1925-26) he was apparently still experimenting with fiction, but exactly what form or direction these experiments took is not clear. He succeeded in gaining entry to the introductory course at Peking University in the summer of 1926 and spent much of his spare time reading new publications of books and magazines, taking an interest in both Chinese and foreign literature. He often discussed literary and artistic subjects with his friends who included Zhou Songdi, Pan Zhenwu 潘振武, Pan Shun 潘训, Rou shi 柔石, Feng Xuefeng 冯雪峰, Wu Guangyu 邬光煜 and Yao Pengzi 姚蓬子.

Recollecting this period much later Zhang wrote:

At this time my thoughts were very gloomy, I felt that there were a lot of problems in the world (the problems of life, revolution, love, etc.) to which I did not know the answers. I denied the efficacy of literature, feeling that it had nothing to do with reality, but my interest nevertheless still lay in literature. I wanted to pursue science, but my mathematics were deficient, and also at Peking University I could not study the things I wanted to study. For these reasons, I sometimes doubted everything, disagreed with everything, and sometimes I even felt that there was nothing for it but to start a revolution I also felt intuitively that if there was to be a revolution then the disparity between rich and poor must be destroyed, even to the point where all government would be destroyed. I felt like this, right up until early 1927, when I came into contact with the teachings of the Party whilst at Peking University, and

¹ Zhou Songdi, 96.

thus I came to believe in Communism.¹

In Zhang's autobiographical entry for Edgar Snow's book Living China (1936) he wrote in more ambiguous terms about his so-called "espousing" of Communism in 1925-1926:

I went along to Peking in 1924, It was then that I began to have definitely my new belief (indicating Marxism) [Edgar Snow's parenthetical interpolation presumably] and gradually to grasp the single truth of history.²

That Zhang took an interest in intellectual movements going on at that time in China seems quite clear but when exactly he started to whole-heartedly believe in Marxism is difficult to date precisely. According to Zhang's old school-friend Zhou Songdi, Zhang joined the Chinese Communist Party at the end of 1926 or early in 1927.³ What can be said with certainty, however, is that Zhang was one of the earliest supporters of the League of Left-Wing Writers when it was established in April 1930 with Lu Xun at its head.

During this period in Beijing, 1925-1926, Zhang's thinking was probably in considerable flux as he came into contact with new ideas as a result of extensive reading of new publications of the time and conversations with his peers about literature, the arts in general and new ideas. Unfortunately, the lack of writings by Zhang during these years makes it impossible to chart his intellectual and literary development at this time.

¹ Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan 1980:2 (9. 1980) 276-7. The above remarks, like all of the writings that are ostensibly Zhang's and published after his stroke in 1975, are of doubtful authenticity. On the one hand, Zhang is supposed to have been severely incapacitated by the stroke that left him half-paralysed but on the other hand here he supposedly is writing reflective and highly lucid reminiscences. His wife, Shen Chengkuan told me (Personal interview, Beijing, 1. 4. 1981) that Zhang prepared a long autobiographical sketch in the early 1950s and it is conceivable that Zhang's most recent autobiographical writings are culled from this early sketch.

² Note that the date of Zhang's arrival in the capital given here does not cog with the date given in the most recent biographical accounts of Zhang's activities.

³ Zhou Songdi, 96.

Experiments with 'symbolism'.

It is not until December 1926 with the publication of Zhang's first symbolist story 'Vibration of the Darkness' 黑的颤动¹ that we begin to obtain an insight into the direction in which Zhang's literary bent was turning during this period. Referring to the publication of 'Vibration of the Darkness', Zhang had this to say in Edgar Snow's Living China:

In 1925² a Peking newspaper [Chenbao fukan] published a piece of mine which was in imitation of the so-called Symbolism. I had then a funny and absurd notion that literature and action are two separate things.

'Vibration of the Darkness' is the first of a set of three 'symbolist' stories that show how Zhang's literary method developed between December 1926 and August 1928 and help one understand better how Zhang came at the end of 1928 to write his earliest realist short story 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days'.

All three of Zhang's stories that were published between December 1926 and August 1928, 'Vibration of the Darkness', 'Towards a New Road' and 'The Black Smile' are to greater and lesser degrees symbolist and non-realistic. Zhang would seem to have been influenced by Russian symbolist writers, but whether this influence was comparatively direct, that is from reading Chinese translations of Russian symbolist stories by writers such as Andreev, or less direct, that is as a result of reading Chinese stories that imitated Russian symbolist works written by writers such as Lu Xun and Yu Dafu, is a matter for conjecture. If one compares these three stories of Zhang's, that are "in imitation of the so-called Symbolism", with Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren's translations of stories

1 Chenbao fukan 1497 (23. 12. 1926).

2 Once again the date is inaccurate; according to Shen Chengkuan, Personal interview, Beijing, 1. 4. 1981, Zhang confirmed that the story referred to in Snow and 'Vibration of the Darkness' are one and the same.

by Andreev such as 'The Lie' and 'Silence',¹ there are thematic correspondences, such as the preoccupation with Death, and also certain artistic correspondences, such as the use of grotesque imagery, but the language used in Zhang's stories does not have parallels with the 'wenyan' 文言 of Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren's translations. If, however, one compares Zhang's stories with Lu Xun's collection Wild Grass 《野草》,² the congruences are far more marked. Both from the point of view of style and language, there are similarities. Both authors were attempting to create a sinister, almost surreal, atmosphere in their works. This they achieved by repetition and the use of suitably sinister vocabulary. There the similarities end, because Lu Xun's Wild Grass concentrates on describing the strange world that surrounds humanity, whereas Zhang's stories show more interest in describing the responses of characters to the strange world they find around them.

The first story, 'Vibration of the Darkness' is the earliest example of Zhang's use of the pseudonym Zhang Tianyi 张天翼. Up until this time all of Zhang's work had appeared under the pseudonym Zhang Wuzheng 张无诤 or occasionally simply Wuzheng 无诤.

The story is written from the point of view of an unidentified nebulous narrator. Night, which the narrator personifies as "a mysterious gentleman who has not an ounce of reason", comes to hound him. Night envelops him and terrifies him. The narrator describes Night as walking like an old man, clumsily and comically. Night's soul is ice, and Night's body is darkness. Everything is enveloped by night and turns into ink. As night approaches, people enter the world of dreams where they write their own poems, that are either contented or sad.

1 These stories are to be found translated under the titles 谩 and 黑犬 respectively in the collection of translations by Lu Xun and his brother entitled 《域外小说集》(1909).

2 The pieces which make up Lu Xun's collection were written between 1924 and 1926. All of the stories in this collection first appeared in the magazine Yu si 《语丝》 during the period December, 1924 to April 1926. All of them predate Zhang's earliest symbolist story 'Vibration of the Darkness' which suggests that Zhang could well have been influenced by Lu Xun's work.

Only the wind is not afraid of Night, but Night is nevertheless without adversaries. The narrator is summoned by Night and carried off in his arms. Night's body is full of sorrow which makes the narrator sorrowful too. The narrator records that he emits the tiniest of cries, and yet this cry is loud enough to pierce through Night's body. The narrator becomes oppressed by the loudness of the noises he is making: the loudness of his breathing, the sound of his heart beating. As the narrator loses all consciousness he reports that "at this point I died". The narrator declares that he has been extinguished and is dead, but that simultaneously everything else has died. "The universe is a huge dead thing, a black dead thing". At this moment, the narrator hears Night's shout which is insistent, both loud and long. Then Night emits a second, quieter sound. When this second sound stops, the narrator returns to his original state, but just then Night's first sound starts again. The narrator feels that Night is calling from a long, long way away, but this is an illusion for Night is really very close by. Suddenly the sound stops abruptly. The narrator is, however, increasingly distracted. He sees black and white regular patterns before his eyes. He has apparently seen such patterns as these before, in his dreams and when ill. These patterns are the friends of Night and Darkness. The narrator declares that his soul has been taken from him and broken into pieces. Meanwhile his body has been gripped in a vice-like embrace. Once more the narrator hears the second sound. Night now looks even more ugly and black than before. The patterns that the narrator sees become more numerous and agitated. For a third time, the second sound can be heard. The narrator says that his breathing and the beat of his heart are inaudible. Night trembles like a flag fluttering in the breeze. For the fourth time the sound comes and the narrator declares that he is dead, completely dead, so that even his soul is dead too.

As an evocation of terror and paranoia this story is moderately successful; its success is limited by the degree to which the reader can identify with the feelings and experiences of the narrator. If a symbolic interpretation is attempted, it is difficult to hazard a guess as to what the symbols of Night,

Darkness, and the character of the terror-racked narrator are meant to represent.

Content and style apart, this story is also interesting for its language, use of unconventional sentence structures, and punctuation. In this and Zhang's subsequent two symbolist stories, certain words describing Night, Darkness and Death recur frequently. Examples are "jijing" (寂靜 meaning "silent" or "silence"), "shenmi" (神秘 meaning "mysterious"), "ning'e" (狞惡 meaning "grotesque"), etc. The sentence structures used by Zhang betray the influence of the grammar of Western languages: clumps of adjectival and adverbial clauses tend to appear at the ends of sentences qualifying what has gone before. Consider for example this sentence: "...; before my eyes there appeared those regular, design-like patterns, white and black, some with winding lines, some with tiny circles, those, those." (...; 眼前現了那些正齊的, 圖案似的花紋來了, 白的和黑的, 有的是曲線, 有的一粒粒圓的, 那些那些。)

Punctuation in 'Vibration of the Darkness' reveals a marked contrast when compared with Zhang's earlier stories in magazines like Libai liu and Xingqi. The stories in these magazines used in the main the system of punctuation made widespread by Lin Shu's use of it in his works.¹ In this system a series of circles to the right of the vertical line is broken every time the writer wishes to indicate a pause or the end of a period to the reader. In 'Vibration of the Darkness', Zhang adopts the 'House' style of punctuation of the Beijing newspaper Chenbao, using what has since come to be the conventional method of marking punctuation in modern Chinese writing. The only distinctive idiosyncrasies of the punctuation used in this story are the frequent use of colons, and full-stops used in combination. Semi-colons are also used but not as frequently as colons. The colon seems to be used to indicate a heightened contrast between the latter part

¹ See Perry Link, Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies, 136: "Lin's use of marginal circles in his texts served as a kind of punctuation which made his stories understandable to a larger group than could otherwise have read them."

of the sentence and what has preceded the colon. Linked dots on the other hand are used to indicate a trailing off at the end of a sentence and either hesitancy or indecision when used in the middle of a sentence. Zhang's use of punctuation was clearly intended to increase the effectiveness of his stories. One other difference between 'Vibration of the Darkness' and Zhang's earlier stories is that the sentences are longer in this his first symbolist story.¹

Zhang's next publication, again a symbolist story and once again appearing in the literary supplement of the Beijing paper Chenbao, was published after an interval of nine months. Its title, which hints at progressive movements and forces for change, is 'Towards a New Road' 走向新的路.² Like 'Vibration of the Darkness', this story also stresses darkness and death, and uses a similar vocabulary. A different narrative technique is used in this story. In contrast to the I-narrator of 'Vibration of the Darkness' and the subsequent story 'The Black Smile', this story has an impersonal, observing, omniscient narrator. Although the story is not particularly long it was nonetheless divided into three parts which appeared on three successive days in September 1927. The reason for this would seem to be to better serve the convenience of the publishers rather than to increase the dramatic effect of the story, even though the breaks in the story mark leaps in time.

In 'Towards a New Road', the reader's attention is centred on a woman who is suffering from an undiagnosed illness. (The nature of her illness is only revealed towards the end of the story). As the woman lies on her sickbed, the narrator reveals for the reader's benefit what is going on in the mind of the woman. She believes that the land of dreams is the place where desires are realised. She has in the past entered the land of dreams

¹ This cannot unfortunately be proved because of the lack of distinction between commas and fullstops in the punctuation used in the early stories, but the sentences in 'Vibration of the Darkness' simply feel longer. Descriptions are more drawn out; changes of subject are less frequent and abrupt than in the early stories.

² Chenbao fukan 2062-4 (15-17. 9. 1927). A translation of this story can be found in Appendix D.

where she had an encounter with a frightening lover who led her to the land of darkness. In this land of darkness she rid herself of her earthly pain, but when she returned from the world of dreams to the world of the awake and living, she realised that her lover and journey were both illusory. Her earliest, ideal lover was Fate 命运, but when Fate failed to illuminate her route, she decided to seek comfort from Death, another personification. At this point, the narrator comments: "This was the history of her dreams, which was like the history of most peoples' dreams."

Having recounted the central character's dream history the narrator diverts the reader's attention to the mother of the central character. She is sitting, watching her daughter's face. The narrator using his omniscient powers to the full informs the reader that the central character's desire for death will soon be realised. Death will come and lead her by the hand along a new road, and thus her earthly sorrow will be ended. Attention reverts once more to the mother, who is sitting waiting, feeling empty and lonely.

The invalid's son comes back from buying medicine. The invalid lying supine looks from her mother to her son. In her eyes, there is no difference in the expressions on their faces.

The second part, the following day, returns the reader's attention to the invalid (rather than observing things through her eyes). Her temperature apparently rose during the night. She is becoming increasingly hallucinatory and frightened. She sees black wheels before her eyes.¹ Suddenly she hears approaching footsteps. She sees a large black thing and feels several blasts of cold air. She imagines that her body is contracting. This black thing slowly but relentlessly comes closer to her bed. In the end the black thing answers her increasingly hysterical cries of "Who are you? Go away!" The black monster says

¹ In 'Vibration of the Darkness' the sick narrator suffers from similar hallucinations: "... before my eyes there appeared those regular, design-like patterns, white and black, some with winding lines, some with tiny circles" Zhang uses a similar hallucination in his later story.

"Weren't you hoping I would come?" She denies this. The black thing asks her why she dreamed of him. Quaking with fear, she calls for her mother. Several people including her mother come into her room in answer to her cries. Her mother is in tears.

The sick woman asks her mother to send the black thing away, but her mother quite understandably does not comprehend what she is talking about. She then asks her father to rid her of the black thing, but he too does not know what she is talking about. Heaving a sigh the father tells his wife to hurry and call the doctor Mr. Jin.

The third part of the story returns the reader to the thoughts of the sick woman. She seems in a better frame of mind with the break of day, but before long she once more appears to be on the verge of hallucination; she sees bright red before her eyes. The narrator interprets her smiling face as saying: "Perhaps Fate still feels affection for me". She seems keen to draw back from her reconnoitre with Death, but is she in any position to make an escape? She asks her mother what the doctor has to say about her illness. Her mother reports that the doctor says her illness is not serious.

Later on when the pain in her stomach is a little less severe she reproaches herself for her weak-will. According to the narrator she is still troubled by the memory of the black monster that had visited her the previous night. When the doctor comes to visit her, she asks him if she will get better. He does not answer her question directly, merely repeating the platitude that her illness is not at all serious. The woman seems swayed by contradictory feelings. First she feels that her mother's calm expression is a sign of resignation to the fact that she will inevitably die. A little later however her mood changes again and sensing an air of optimism in the people around her, she begins to believe that she really will get better. Somewhat reassured, she goes to sleep. Unfortunately, the next morning her old fears return. The black rings before her eyes are back again and she begins to shake like a leaf.

The story builds up very quickly to an uncertain conclusion.

Once more the sick woman hears the sound of footsteps. Then we are told: "She moaned a few times. After this everything fell into silence". Thus, the story ends, the reader being left in puzzlement as to the exact outcome.

This story like the previous one contrives to produce an atmosphere by the repetition of words that describe darkness, silence and death. Concepts like Life, Fate and Death are personified, so that what are usually abstract entities adopt in these stories tangible forms (even though their tangibility ultimately proves illusory). The total effect of this story is sinister and rather oppressive.

It was almost a year later that Zhang's next story 'The Black Smile' 黑的微笑 appeared.¹ Like the previous two stories it makes full use of the themes of approaching darkness and death.

'The Black Smile' uses a diary-entry structure in which the first-person narrator, a 73 year-old man, records his feelings. From several standpoints this is a fascinating story. First, it looks back to Zhang's earlier symbolist stories, 'Vibration of the Darkness' and 'Towards a New Road', whilst at the same time marking an advance in technique over these two earlier essays at symbolist style fiction. Secondly, at one and the same time, it looks forward to the realist diary-entry style technique of Zhang's next story 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' and backward to Lu Xun's diary-entry study of paranoia first published in 1918 and entitled 'Diary of a Madman' 狂人日记.

Like Zhang's earlier symbolist stories, this story also makes extensive use of personified abstract symbols, but unlike the earlier stories the evocation of paranoia and the intense personalisation of the experiences of the first-person narrator are more pronounced. The description tends to be simultaneously naturalistic and grotesque, the grotesqueness again being honed to a greater perfection than in the earlier stories.

¹ Gongxian 3:8 (15. 8. 1928).

The story (and the first dated diary-entry) begins in an exclamatory way. The narrator addresses the reader directly: "Look, Night is as lofty as this," The insistence of the narrator's efforts to arrest the reader's attention is particularly striking. The narrator goes on to reveal himself to be a 73-year-old man who is preoccupied with thoughts about his imminent death.¹ In the narrator's troubled mind, Night and Death are linked. According to the narrator, Night silences all living things, and draws a pall over the sexual activities of the world. Gripped with fear at the thought of the approach of Night and Death, the narrator offers a prayer to a Buddhist deity. He draws solace from the thought that he will be mourned after his death. Vainly seeking the source of his fear, he comforts himself by counting Buddhist beads and reciting sutras.

Every day people come to visit the ageing narrator. Betraying increasing signs of paranoia, the narrator doubts the motives of his visitors, fearful that they are merely feigning affection.

The narrator recounts that his granddaughter showed him a little rat in a cage. (This calls to mind the freeing of the canary in Andreev's story 'Silence'.) Dismayed, he thinks of a strategy to persuade her to let the rat go, saying that the rat's mother loves the rat as much as the granddaughter's mother loves her. The little girl is persuaded and lets the rat go, which leaves the grandfather narrator to reflect in a self-indulgent and philosophical way on his motives for wishing to see the little animal go free.

In the next diary entry, the narrator's incipient paranoia reaches a new height: he thinks there are people outside his room talking about him. As he cannot hear distinctly, he imagines what they might be saying. When he goes out of his room to investigate, he becomes gripped with fear. He thinks that he can hear people talking about "the first blow with the axe", which he declares to be a tradition connected with coffin-making whereby the person who lets the first axe-blow fall knows when the coffin's intended occupant will die. Once more the narrator resorts to Buddhism for comfort and recites sutras.

1 cf. Samuel Beckett's 'Krappp's Last Tape' (1959).

The next entry is very short and shows signs of empty bravado. He declares: "I am not afraid of Death, what is there to fear from Death?" This seems to be at odds with his earlier remarks about his fear of death, but is entirely consonant with what one would expect of an elderly person wrestling with fear of death.

We already know that his coffin has been made ready for his demise and lies waiting in the next room. Wu San, the person who let the first axe-blow fall in making the coffin, comes to visit him. The narrator badly wants to ask Wu San when he is expected to die, but does not manage to do so. Instead they discuss the growing of flowers, the burning of incense, and Buddhist monks.

The narrator feels that the amount of rice that he eats each day is getting less and less. His daughter tries to assuage his fears. As the story proceeds to its conclusion, the narrator becomes increasingly agitated. Sounding ever more desperate, he reaffirms that he does not fear Death. He takes rather twisted comfort from the thought that the youths of today are the aged and dying of tomorrow.

Finally the narrator ponders philosophically on the possible consequences of dying whilst sleeping, or even worse, dying whilst asleep and dreaming. He listens in agitation for sounds from the adjoining room where his coffin is placed, which would presumably be a sign of imminent death, but he hears nothing. Thus the story ends and the reader is left uncertain as to whether the narrator's final hour follows fast upon his last diary entry or not.

The philosophical pondering of the introspective narrator marks a distinct change in style when this story is compared with Zhang's two earlier symbolist stories and also the detective stories. This new facet of Zhang's literary technique points the way ahead to stories like 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' with their pondering, reflective, philosophising I-narrators, and makes the transition from juvenile, detective and comical

stories, via stories "in imitation of the so-called Symbolism" to Zhang's mature realist short stories in the modern tradition all the more comprehensible.

Conclusion.

Zhang began writing fiction when he was a teenager, but it was not until 1929 that he first started to write short stories in the modern realist style. His first modern realist short story, called 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days',¹ was written towards the end of 1928 and after Zhang had failed to find a magazine publisher willing to publish it, was finally accepted by Lu Xun and published in the magazine he ran together with Yu Dafu called Benliu 《奔流》 in April 1929. All of Zhang's work published before 1929 can be regarded as experimental. The pre-1929 works number 22 in all and are not all fiction; some of them are short critical or autobiographical pieces.² The most significant of these early works which mainly appeared in Shanghai "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School" magazines were eight detective stories with a common hero, Xu Changyun. Other short stories by Zhang written during the period 1922-29 can be classified as comical stories, heartbreak stories and symbolist stories. Zhang's publications during this period were not spread evenly over the years; between the end of 1923 and December 1926 he apparently published nothing even though he was still writing.³ The difference between the three symbolist stories that appeared in 1926, 1927 and 1928 and the juvenile fiction that had appeared in 1922 and 1923 is quite marked, as is the difference between the symbolist stories and the realistic short stories that were published from 1929 onwards. Whilst Zhang's pre-1929 publications are indifferent in quality and lack the maturity of his subsequent realist short stories, they do nevertheless offer an intriguing insight into Zhang's development as a writer. In more general terms Zhang provides an example

1 This story is translated in Appendix D.

2 A recent survey of Zhang's pre-1929 works which attempts analysis and categorisation is Du Yuanming's 杜元明, '在探索中前进——简谈张天翼的民主革命时期文学道路', Xiangjiang wenyi 1981:11 (11. 1981) 70-73.

3 Shen Chengkuan et al., 'Zhang Tianyi wenxue huodong nianbiao', 273.

of an author moulded and transformed by the various cultural and political influences concomitant with the May Fourth era. Another point worth remembering is that Zhang's was a native-born talent untainted by a period of study abroad so Zhang shows us what could be achieved by a writer who, in spite of spending his whole life in China, was clearly modern and Western in outlook.

According to Zhang's own account of his development, he began his career as a story teller by recounting stories that he had read for the benefit of his schoolfellows. The next step from this was to create his own stories with which to regale his friends. The stories published in 1922 and 1923 reveal a writer in search of a style, specifically a narrative style. The Xu Changyun stories, though essentially derivative (Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories and Chinese imitations by such writers as Cheng Xiaoqing 程小青 are their clear precursors), did give Zhang opportunities to experiment with various narrative techniques. Zhang, like others of his contemporaries, must have been perplexed by the conflicting narrative traditions with which he was faced. On the one hand, Zhang had read and was fond of the traditional canon of Chinese vernacular fiction with its distinctive conversational narrative technique, and on the other hand Zhang was attracted by the Western modern short story as exemplified in the works of such writers as de Maupassant and Chekhov.

Though Zhang clearly aimed to write stories in the style of the Western short story there were, however, aspects of the traditional Chinese storyteller's art as exemplified in vernacular novels like The Water Margin that could be adapted to present needs. Thus Zhang can be found in his pre-1929 short stories wrestling with the problem of finding a satisfactory narrative mode and at the same time trying to blend the narrative techniques he had observed and learned from his reading of Western and Chinese literature.

In most of these pre-1929 stories Zhang uses a first-person narrator: presumably out of convention in the case of the Xu Changyun stories which imitate Conan Doyle's first-person

narrative technique by means of which Dr. Watson tells the stories of the criminal cases of his friend Sherlock Holmes; but out of choice in the other comical, heartbreak and symbolist stories. The majority of Zhang's post-1929 short stories use the less personal third-person narrative method. It is however an oversimplification to say that Zhang used only two kinds of narrative technique. Within each of the two broad narrative categories, Zhang like Maupassant, Chekhov and other writers of short stories introduced subtleties and levels of sophistication that make analysis of his narrative techniques a far from simple task. At the most fundamental level Zhang occasionally uses a first-person narrative within the larger first-person narrative frame in Xu Changyun stories like 'Jade Jug'. More sophisticated and less easily explained narrative techniques are best illustrated by such an example as the ending of 'Bad Dream'.¹

Already in the pre-1929 stories, Zhang occasionally shows that he is keenly aware of the problems of narrative technique and that he is conscious of the author's potential manipulative power to control the narrator. The importance of firm manipulation by the author of the narrator and by extension the material that is being narrated is an old truth about short fiction.

I believe Zhang was, not only during this early period but also throughout his fiction-writing career, at all times sharply conscious of his authorial and narrative responsibilities. This characteristic of authorial self-awareness can be extended to most other writers of short stories in the May Fourth period, the only difference between the various writers being the degree of self-indulgence of their self-awareness, the pinnacle of self-indulgent narration being reached in the romantic stories of the "Art for Art's Sake" school of practitioners.

The group of eight Xu Changyun stories are the most significant of Zhang's pre-1929 works from the point of view that they represent a sustained attempt to create a consistent, recognisable and distinctive character to play the role of

¹ For a discussion of the ending of 'Bad Dream', see above p. 40.

master detective in a series of casebook stories. But if one wishes to pick out the stories that are most significant from the point of view of Zhang's development as a writer then the stories one would isolate would be Zhang's three "symbolist" stories published between 1926 and 1928. These stories, published, as they were, at intervals of more than six months, chart increasingly sophisticated experiments in technique, both narrative and stylistic, whilst keeping roughly within the confines of what might reasonably be expected of stories that were written "in imitation of the so-called Symbolism" as Zhang put it. As I hope I have already demonstrated, it is possible to trace an important stage in Zhang's development as a writer by way of these three stories until drawing all his experimental threads together Zhang was finally in a position to write his first published realist short story 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days'. It is worth noting the way in which Zhang in 'Towards a New Road' and 'The Black Smile' varied one technical aspect, whilst retaining all the other characteristics of the preceding story. In 'Towards a New Road', Zhang experimented with a new narrative method, an introspective, reflective first-person narrator, enabling the reader to identify with the narrator and her highly personalised experiences. The themes in 'Towards a New Road' are, however, the same as the themes that are to be found in the preceding story 'Vibration of the Darkness'. 'The Black Smile' retains the highly personalised first-person narrative technique of 'Towards a New Road' whilst experimenting with a diary-entry framework with which to contain the narrative. In 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days', Zhang retained both the narrative technique and the diary-entry framework of 'The Black Smile' whilst realistic description replaces the fantasies that lard the narrative of 'The Black Smile'.

With the publication of 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' Zhang abandoned his earlier experiments with symbolist technique, and having found a satisfactory way to express the stories he wished to tell, Zhang subsequently made consistent use of a realistic narrative method.

Of Zhang's other earlier experiments with technique, those

that are of greatest significance in giving a hint of Zhang's subsequent use of satire, as exemplified most notably in ^癖 'Mr. Hua Wei' 华威先生, are his comical stories such as 'New Poetry' 新诗 and 'Strange Fetishes' 怪癖. Short as these two stories are, they nonetheless possess a satirical edge that makes itself felt amidst a general atmosphere of comic exuberance.

Two underlying currents run through the pre-1929 works by Zhang. One is the search for a satisfactory narrative technique. The other, which is quite closely related to the problem of finding a satisfactory narrative technique, is the problem of resolving the complex interrelationship between author, author/narrator, work and reader, whilst at the same time reconciling external contradictions such as, for example, conflicting attitudes towards literature as found amongst the older, more staid members and younger, more eclectic members of 1920s Chinese society. That this problem was never far from Zhang's mind is evidenced by recurring references to this problem in the pre-1929 stories. Zhang's treatment of this problem took two forms: questioning of the nature of fiction; and contrived distancing of the narrative method. The question of the nature of fiction and its relationship with fact is a philosophical question, and as Zhang has never claimed to be a philosopher it is unsurprising that his treatment of this question is far from full-bloodedly philosophical. Attention is drawn to the problem of fictionality by the introduction into the narrative of remarks about "making fiction" 做小说. In traditional vernacular fiction such remarks as these are unimaginable, because although the framework of each chapter, within which the narrative is told, begins and ends in the same way (beginning "The story goes" 话说, and ending "... if you want to know the reason for this, please listen to the next chapter for the explanation." 毕竟如何缘故,且听下回分解) suggesting the oral storytelling technique of earlier times (probably the Song dynasty), the content and method of presentation of the narrative urges the reader to willingly suspend his/her disbelief. In this case the reader enters into a compact with the author/narrator as a result of which the fictional events enjoy a

"factual" existence in the minds of the reader and the author/narrator. Occasionally in Zhang's early stories, the tacit agreement between reader and author/narrator to accept the fictional events recounted in the narrative as dramatic "fact", must be considered to have been deliberately broken by the author/narrator. This forces the reader to abandon the pretence of "willing suspension of disbelief" and accept at face value the fictional nature of the narrative. When the point is further elaborated as it is by Xu Changyun in 'Empty Room', the reader is led to consider further the implications of drawing attention to the fictional nature of the narrative, by which the inter-relationship between fact, fiction, and what I have called dramatic "fact" above, is called into question.

Deliberately contrived distancing of the narrative method, which is the second form that Zhang's treatment of the problem of resolving the complex interrelationship between author, author/narrator, work and reader took, is a technique that Lu Xun made considerable use of in his short stories. In Lu Xun's story 'Upstairs at the Inn' 在酒楼上, for instance, there is a first-person narrator who listens to a story told him by an acquaintance whom he has not met for a long time. The first-person narrator merely acts as a sounding board and an inconspicuous sounding board at that whilst the reader and the author seemingly observe the tableau from a discreet distance. In fact the story is distanced even further since the narrator's acquaintance relates a story that he knows only second-hand. Several possible reasons can be posited for using a narrative technique such as this. Sometimes the author or author/narrator does not wish to be associated too closely with the story being told, occasionally the reason will be political, occasionally personal. On yet other occasions artistic considerations may take precedence; some stories are more effective if an elaborate distancing method of narration is used. In Zhang's pre-1929 stories he occasionally makes use of elaborate distancing methods of narration. The most noteworthy example is the story 'Bad Dream', a clearly political analysis of anti-Japanese feeling amongst Chinese people resulting from the unequal treaties of 1919 that had given rise to what is

known as the "May Fourth Movement". Zhang seems in this story to have exercised a measure of caution, probably because of the political nature of the story, and possibly also because of a degree of ambiguity in his feelings towards some of the attitudes and events described in the story. The most curious thing about 'Bad Dream' is not that Zhang should have used a distancing narrative technique but that he should have drawn such clear attention to what he was doing by having the first person narrator declare in the last line of the story: "There was nothing else for it but to get up straightaway and put my clothes on, and tell this to Wuzheng [Zhang's pseudonym], saying that this material could be worked up into a piece of fiction". As if the technique of relating events contained in a dream were not a sufficiently distant method of narration, Zhang adds one more layer of distancing by making it plain that Wuzheng and the first-person dreaming narrator are not one and the same.

Bound up closely with Zhang's search for an effective narrative technique was the problem of what kind of language to use in his fiction. It is not surprising that Zhang experimented with several different types of language in his pre-1929 stories. In China in the 1920s, several types of language were used by writers of fiction. Some imitated the style of language made popular by Lin Shu in his translations of famous Western novels and stories, namely a kind of "wenyan" that followed the lead set by the 'Tongcheng' 桐城 school at the end of the 19th century. Other writers imitated the traditional vernacular. Yet others—and this group makes up the majority—set out to write a sort of modern vernacular that bore a closer resemblance to the contemporary spoken language than the vernacular found in traditional novels. These attempts sometimes resulted in a curious hybrid language which was neither modern nor classical and came to be known as "ban wen bu bai" 半文不白. Lu Xun's short stories though written in modern vernacular 白话文 were intelligible only to a well-educated minority. Most other writers of fiction in 1920s China produced works written in a language that was more or less literary in flavour. It was not until the 1930s that language that was

based closely and consistently on the contemporary modern vernacular became widely used in the writing of fiction.

Most of Zhang's pre-1929 fiction was written in language that falls into the category "modern vernacular" 白话文, but at the same time his language varies considerably across the possible spectrum of "modern vernacular" writing. Only two of Zhang's pre-1929 writings are exceptions to this generalisation. They are Zhang's earliest story 'New Poetry' and the story 'Bad Dream'. There are cogent reasons why Zhang should have chosen to use a language that tended towards traditional "wenyan" in these two stories. In 'New Poetry', Zhang satirised contemporary attempts to write poetry in current vernacular that did not obey the ancient conventions about rhyme, length of line and language, which distinguish traditional poems. Zhang's choice of language was thus determined by his satirical objective and the need to create a contrast between the formality of "wenyan" and the informality of current vernacular imitations of Western free verse. Zhang's motives for using "wenyan" in his story 'Bad Dream' were quite different. It was a tradition to write passionate tirades in classical Chinese because of the increased effectiveness lent to essays by formal, terse, punchy language and the use of highly stylised literary language in a set-piece commemorating National Humiliation Day would be entirely appropriate. Another possible explanation is that the story was aimed at the older generation, who with their stick-in-the-mud attitudes responded badly to articles and stories written in modern-style prose. Zhang may have been deliberately dressing up his material in a form that would prove acceptable to those members of the public least likely to concur with the ideas expressed in his story.

The kind of language that Zhang used in his pre-1929 stories gradually changed, becoming in his three symbolist stories of 1926, 1927 and 1928, ever more close to the linguistic style he was to use in his realist short stories. Zhang's experimentation with symbolism was a passing fad and we shall see in the next chapter that Zhang's decision to write realist fiction brought with it a decision to write in a language that increasingly bore a close resemblance to the contemporary vernacular.

Chapter Three

Zhang's fiction written in the realist mode (1929-1932)

Introduction

Zhang, recalling the period immediately after 1929 in a recent autobiographical sketch,¹ wrote:

After the short story 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' was published in Benliu 1:10 edited by Lu Xun and Yu Dafu, I went on writing and felt that literary works were capable of playing an important role with respect to propaganda and agitation -- for I had seen with my own eyes many youngsters who had become inclined towards revolution as a result of their contact with literature. Subsequently it became increasingly apparent, that one wanted to make the reading masses lean towards revolution and recognise or be aware of the iniquities of the social system of that time and the dark nature of the government etc., through the medium of literary works. If literary works could be of service in this respect and if they were also written in such a way that people liked to read them and they were able to attract readers, then this would be of great significance. In this way, I gradually came to consider writing to be my profession.

Earlier in the same autobiographical article,² Zhang dates his espousal of Communism as the beginning of 1927 and attributes his contact with Communist teachings whilst attending Peking University as his reason for joining the Party. According to Zhou Songdi's 周颂棣 recent reminiscence about Zhang³ "Tianyi probably

周颂棣 recent reminiscence about Zhang³ "Tianyi probably". Again, it is important to note that this autobiographical sketch was published some time after Zhang had suffered a stroke in 1975 and must therefore be regarded with circumspection.

² *ibid.* p. 276.

³ 'Wo he Tianyi xiangchu de rizi' 我和天翼相处的日子, Hua cheng 1981:2 (5. 1981) 93-98.

began to participate in the Chinese Communist Party towards the end of 1926 or at the beginning of 1927". Zhou's evidence for this is the fact that shortly afterwards and before Zhang left Beijing for the South in the spring of 1927, Zhang had already introduced him into the Party.

Further indications of Zhang's espousal of Marxism at an early stage in his literary career are to be found in his literary critical and theoretical writings of the early 1930s.¹ Examples of Marxist terminology and thought used by Zhang in such articles include 'scientific dialectic' 科学的辩证法 and the concept of the proletariat being divided into the three broad categories of factory-workers, peasants and soldiers 工人, 农人, 士兵.

Zhang also makes the point that the majority of Chinese writers, if not all, at this time were members of the educated petit-bourgeoisie. He, himself, clearly falls into this category and both his family background and education served to establish and consolidate his position as a member of educated petit-bourgeois society. That Zhang should have begun his career as a writer of realist short stories by writing about the intellectual class of which he was a member, is not at all surprising. An important group amongst the various groups and thematic classes of fiction into which Zhang's literary works can be divided deals with the problems faced by the educated petit-bourgeoisie in trying to adjust to the society in which they found themselves.

Zhang's first three realist short stories.

'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' 三天半的梦² is the earliest example of this thematic class. This story, which charts the actions and disordered feelings of a young school-teacher upon returning home to visit his ageing parents, is told by a first-person narrator in the form of a letter written over a period of several days to a friend. The narrator betrays easily

¹ See Beidou 2:1 (20. 1. 1932) 151-2 and Beidou 2:3, 4 (20. 7. 1932) 457-460.

² Benliu 1:10 (20. 4. 1929) 1789-1807. See Appendix D for a translation.

recognisable characteristics of the educated petit-bourgeoisie: he wrestles with his feelings of alienation from his parents and home; shows impatience with the old-fashioned good nature of his mother and father; and is contemptuous of his less well-educated fellow passengers on the train. Self-indulgently, he intellectualises his confused feelings, giving expression to his thoughts in a letter to his friend.

The formal framework within which this story is set harps back to Zhang's previous work, 'The Black Smile' which also used diary-entry format and first-person narrative. It is a technique which has the advantage of creating a sense of immediacy in the mind of the reader, since the dated entries are supposedly composed concurrently or within a short time of the events that give rise to them, and also at the same time giving the appearance of personalised experience with which the reader can identify or sympathise.

The next two of Zhang's stories 'Retaliation' 报复¹ and 'From Emptiness to Fullness' (also known as 'Mr. Jingye'), both deal with members of the educated classes and fall into the same thematic class as 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days'. Unlike 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' with its introspective first-person narrator, these two stories both use a third-person narrative method. This gives the impression that the narrator is standing beside the reader, contemplating the activities of the characters in the story, from a discreet narrative distance. This is particularly true of 'Retaliation' which is the story of the relationship between a young man Mr. Huang 黄先生 and a young woman Miss Bu 卜小姐.

The relationship between Miss Bu and Mr. Huang is no simple romantic matter; there is the added complication of Miss Bu's 'infidelity' with Mr. Huang's friend Zhao 赵 whilst Mr. Huang was away in the south. The young man and woman quarrel in Mr. Huang's hotel bedroom, and Miss Bu finally reduced to tears, makes to jump out of the window. They struggle and Mr. Huang embracing her tries to console her. They kiss and make up,

1 Mengya yuekan 1:1 (1. 1930).

have dinner, and finding that it is too late for Miss Bu to return home, prepare to spend this 'last' night together. In the final three lines of the story, the narrator reveals for the reader's benefit what this 'last' night means for the two characters:

For the woman this last night was meant to repay him, to repay his love, to repay his leniency, and what might be called his chivalrous heart.

The man thought of it in this way:

"How marvellous it would be if a son were to come of this night."

From the point of view of behaviour and attitude, Mr. Huang and Miss Bu are unmistakable representatives of the educated petit-bourgeoisie. Should there have been any doubt in the reader's mind, it would surely be removed by the narrator's revelation of the educational and social standing of Mr. Huang:

He is not a university student, nor a poet or the like; he is merely a man of twenty-seven or twenty-eight who has spent a few years making his way in the world. Since he had actually attended school for a few years, he had become acquainted with the new books and magazines that were appearing at the time If you were to see him for the first time, you would perhaps suspect him of being a philosopher.

This story to a large extent relies on dialogue to articulate the plot. The speeches of the two characters are often quite long, and lack that terse, punchy, naturalistic quality that is the hallmark of Zhang's later, more mature works.

'From Emptiness to Fullness' 从空虚到充实¹ was Zhang's longest work to date, and is somewhat diffuse as a result of its length. This story is about students and is set against a background of revolution and subversion. In this respect 'Emptiness to Fullness' is an example of a story that presents petit-bourgeois characters going beyond the normal confines of their world. The preoccupation with personal concerns that is

¹ Mengya yuekan 1:2 (1. 2. 1930).

apparent in 'Dream Lasting Three and a Half Days' and 'Retaliation' has been largely replaced in this story with large-scale concerns that affect the whole of society.

In the opening section of the twelve sections that comprise this story, the main character Li Jingye 李荆野 is accompanied on a drunken escapade by his friend and fellow-student Lao Hui 老惠. They are clearly of the youthful educated petit-bourgeois class and this impression is further reinforced by the fact that their conversation is from time to time punctuated with words and names from European languages (mostly English and French) such as: 'Baudelaire', 'Décadence', 'spontaneous', 'Taras Bulba', 'Beardsley', 'impulse', 'modern', 'bon vivant', 'intellect', 'Wilde', etc.¹

At one point in the story there is a raid by military police on the building where Li Jingye lives and he is arrested. They place him in jail where he has plenty of time to ponder philosophically such questions as the reason for his confinement and the meaning of life. In this respect the intellectualised retrospection of this part of the story calls to mind similar introspection in Zhang's non-realist stories 'Vibration of the Darkness' and 'The Black Smile' as well as his earlier realist story 'Dream Lasting Three and a Half Days'. Whilst in jail, Li Jingye learns that a fellow-student called Ge Ping 戈平, who would seem by implication to be a revolutionary activist, is being held in a nearby cell. For the first time, Zhang treats of violence and brutality. Later examples of highly distasteful description, as for instance the scene in the story 'Hate' where a wounded soldier tries hopelessly to scratch clean his maggot-infested knee, use a direct narrative method, which although not narrated by the sufferer is at least witnessed 'first-hand'. In this story, however, Li Jingye merely hears the sounds of Ge Ping being interrogated and subjected to torture, and it is only by report that he learns from one of his jailers that Ge Ping was stabbed seven times with a knife before finally succumbing to his wounds. Only distanced accounts of gory or

¹ These words are printed in the original Western forms; no attempt has been made to render them in Chinese characters.

distasteful events are to be found in these the earliest realist short stories. This sort of distancing was abandoned by Zhang with the publication of 'Twenty-one',¹ but resumed again in 'Smile'² and subsequent stories.

Another aspect of the narrative technique used in this story that is worthy of remark is the way in which the time-sequence is fractured. In the earlier stories Zhang invariably used a linear narrative time-sequence but in section eight of 'From Emptiness to Fullness' he experimented for the first time with a broken time-scale. Li Jingye is still in a military prison and as the section opens a warder at the door of his cell asks him if he is awake. Jingye sits up slowly and puts on his jacket. "Congratulations", says the warder. Jingye asks "Why?" but at this moment the narrator interrupts the narrative to supply the information that the previous afternoon Jingye had been interviewed by a military judge. Later in the same section after several paragraphs of explanatory narrative and reported dialogue between Jingye and the judge, the linear time-sequence is resumed when Jingye asks the warder what has happened to Ge Ping.

In Zhang's earlier fiction, in the Xu Changyun story 'Last Will and Testament' for example, all information necessary to the plot is supplied to the reader within the framework of a linear time-scale. Any earlier events that happened outside the time-scale of the story itself are supplied to the reader by one of the characters in the story rather than in a show of omniscience by a shadowy narrator.

The first appearance of proletarian characters in Zhang's fiction:
'After moving House'.

Zhang's next story 'After moving House'³ marks an important change in artistic direction and is the earliest example of one facet of Zhang's creativity which gives rise to a group of stories that form a distinct generic class. This story like the later 'Bees', 'A Strange Place' and 'Chocolate' portrays the world of adults through the not always fully comprehending eyes of children.

1 Wenxue shenghuo 1:1 (1. 3. 1931).

2 Xiandai 4:4 (1. 8. 1934).

3 Mengya yuekan 1:5 (1. 5. 1930).

This story like 'From Emptiness to Fullness' which precedes it is set against a background of revolution and subversion. Dakun 大坤, a young boy, and his family have just moved into a new neighbourhood. Dakun quickly makes friends with another little boy called Afu 阿伏. Together these two tease a prissy boy and girl who live opposite and who are the children of prosperous parents. The contrast between privileged and underprivileged children is effectively revealed in confrontations between Dakun and Afu and the children who live opposite. Dakun and Afu are treated contemptuously, disdainfully and patronisingly by the three school-teachers who are accompanying a party of primary school children that includes the boy that lives opposite:

The male teacher puffed out his chest, licked his lips, and looking as though he was about to make a speech addressed the two women teachers:

"These children are really awful they are the hooligans of the future. These children are all likely to become hooligans in the future, their parents do nothing at all to educate them As a rule, I am in fact a strong advocate of equality, I also 'speak out for' the sanctity of the working class, but they are too"

This is also Zhang's first attempt at characterising the lower classes. Dakun and his family are members of the urban proletariat and their speech and behaviour provides a contrast not only with the speech and behaviour of the prissy, privileged children and their accompanying adults, but also with all of the characters that have appeared in Zhang's stories prior to this one.

Consider, for example, this description of Dakun's behaviour:

During the night, after the main gate of the foreign house had been closed, Dakun pulled down his trousers in the gateway and deposited a pile of excrement.

In another example from the same story, a policeman guarding the entrance to the park Dakun and Afu wish to visit, stops them from going in. Dakun curses him saying "Screw you and yours for

thirteen generations" (『操你十三代窝窝,....』)

In one of Zhang's theoretical articles published in 1932, under the title 'The reasons why literature is in the doldrums and solutions to the problem', ¹ Zhang was to advocate that "Every one of our new writers should leave his window and writing desk, and go into society where the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers are to be found." In the same article, Zhang rather self-deprecatingly admitted his own failure to overcome the lingering remnants of old consciousness. Another theoretical article written later the same year, which was published together with contributions from other writers under the collective title 'Soliciting articles about the problem of popularizing literature' ² describes how popularization might be accomplished:

"Content naturally needs to be adapted to the masses: the masses should be given the knowledge they need, in order that they will understand what significance their own lives have. The masses are suffering, and we need to explain to them the source of this suffering, and make them aware of the solutions available to them."

This aim clearly underlies Zhang's stories like 'The Twenty-one' 二十一个³ and 'The Bread Queue' 面包线⁴ which were dubbed by C. T. Hsia as 'agitational'. ⁵ 'After moving House' is the first though not specially successful example of this trend in Zhang's literary development, for it seems to be an attempt by the author to understand the masses.

Zhang's first story with a rural setting: 'San taiye and Guisheng'

Zhang's next story to be published, 'San taiye and Guisheng' 三太爷与桂生⁶ deals with attempts by tenants of San taiye to revolt against feudal oppression.

1 Beidou 2:1 (20. 1. 1932).

2 Beidou 2:3, 4 (20. 7. 1932).

3 Wenxue shenghuo 1:1 (1. 3. 1931).

4 Beidou 1:3 (20. 11. 1931).

5 See C. T. Hsia, *Modern Chinese Fiction*, p. 214 ff.

6 In Cong kongxu dao chongshi 《从空虚到充实》 Shanghai, Lianhe Shidian (5. 1. 1931).

The story which is told in the first person by a narrator who is an elderly retainer in the employ of Chen san taiye 陈三太爷, is presented as a dramatic monologue. The narrator seems to be addressing a second person, but no responses to the narrator's questions and observations are recorded. His observations show no great insight into the events being described, and the events themselves, no matter how horrifying, are described in a matter of fact way without any emotional charge.

The leader of the first revolt is Guisheng, a labourer in the Chen household. The revolt is crushed firmly by a local military unit and Guisheng escapes to Shanghai. Later he returns and is forgiven by his employer. Once again he tries to organise the peasant tenant farmers. Unfortunately San taiye gets wind of what Guisheng is planning and lays a trap for Guisheng and his sister Zhaodi 招弟 by which he can dispose of them both. They are finally buried alive 'pour encourager les autres'.

The narrator describes the scene thus:

When they were being buried, I hurried over to take a look. They both had cloth stuffed in their mouths. They couldn't cry out, and could only snort through their noses, making a noise as though they were wrapped in bedclothes Zhaodi seemed to have fainted, for she did not move. Guisheng struggled at first, and then the first shovelful of earth came down on him, and he struggled again, just like when you tread on a worm. His face looked forlorn, and his nose and forehead were covered in wrinkles, perhaps there was also something of an air of hatred about his appearance, as though he were cursing in his guts Another big pile of earth went down, and all one could see was the earth moving It moved and then stopped

The experiment with the dramatic monologue form of narration does not ultimately prove successful mainly because the technique of excising the comments and responses of the narrator's interlocutor appears unnatural and dispenses with the dramatic

effect that a fully recorded dialogue would have given this story.

It is only at the very end of this story that the narrator comes close to expressing an opinion. In the very last sentence of the story, the narrator declares: "After the second Dragon Boat festival had gone by, and there were no incidents at all, I then left the Chen household." (第二年端午过了, 一点什么岔也没有, 那时候我走出了陈家。) In this parting remark, admittedly expressed in a negative construction, the narrator gives but the slightest hint of tacit support for and interest in attempts to bring trouble to Chen san taiye and his household.

'Three Brothers': another story about the educated petit-bourgeoisie.

Zhang's next story entitled 'Three Brothers' 三弟兄¹ once more directed the focus of his authorial interest towards the educated petit-bourgeoisie.

The narrator using the third person to recount his story concentrates the reader's attention closely upon Wang Qi 王琪, a student. The interest of the story lies in Wang Qi's reflections about life, success and ambition. His contemplations are triggered by reading in a newspaper of the death of someone with whom he went to secondary school, a certain Gong Rentian 龚任天. This reminds Wang Qi of another fellow student of his secondary school days called Fusan 复三 who committed suicide after failing to make a success of life upon leaving school. Wang Qi reflects upon what became of his two friends after they left school. Gong Rentian unlike Fusan was not without position and standing after leaving school. Coming from a wealthy family that had property, a large store and a factory, he secured a post as 'mayor' ('xianzhang' 县长) in his hometown when the family business collapsed. According to the newspaper article both Gong Rentian and the Public Security chief in the town were killed when marauding bandit forces attacked the town.

¹ In Gong Kongxu dao chongshi 《从空虚到充实》 Shanghai, Lianhe Shudian (5. 1. 1931).

Wang Qi attributes the demise of his two friends to the vicissitudes of contemporary life. He wonders in the light of what has become of his two old school friends what the future holds for him in such turbulent times:

"Wang Qi's nerves had suffered a shock. He felt alone: of the three brothers, two had died. For the past few days he had not been in the mood to do anything. At night he was having frightful nightmares. But with him it was not simply a matter of sorrow: it would be better to describe it as fear rather than sorrow."

The story is divided into three numbered sections, all three of which have Wang Qi as their focus. The first section introduces the news of the death of Wang Qi's friend Gong Rentian which reminds him of his other friend Fusan. Section two goes deeper into Wang Qi's thought processes, describing what he thinks about life and what it holds for him in the light of what has become of his two old schoolfriends. The third section takes Wang Qi's philosophising a stage further, for it describes a conversation between Wang Qi and his friend and mentor Shuyu 叔又瑜. Shuyu, unlike Wang Qi, seems self-possessed and with his ideas in good order. Their different modes of speaking help to distinguish their characters; Wang Qi speaks hesitantly, frequently trailing off half way through a sentence or punctuating his remarks with a self-contradictory "That's not right" "不是", whilst Shuyu on the other hand speaks carefully and clearly in long, well-constructed periods.

Shuyu's philosophy comes across most forcefully when he analyses the attitudes of Fusan and Gong Rentian:

"He [Fusan] and Rentian have always been unaware of these things, they believed this abnormal society would disintegrate and there would come a time when there would be an orderly world. But they did not go in pursuit of this, they did not go out and act, because if one were to act then one would certainly have to abandon one's position [in society], and go and join that other group He could not face giving up his comfortable existence"

In the stories written between 1929 and the end of 1932, there are many examples of intellectuals having difficulty in coming to terms with contemporary society. The earliest stories like 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days', 'From Emptiness to Fullness' and 'Three Brothers' all show a tendency to describe the struggles of the suffering central character in cerebral terms. These characters turn things over in their minds, but reach no clear-cut conclusions and reach no decisions to act to change the society they find around them. The nearest that one of these intellectual characters comes to decisive action is to leave the capital and move south. This is what Li Jingye does in 'From Emptiness to Fullness' but what happens to him after his departure from Beijing is cloaked in ambiguity. Various rumours come back to his friends in Beijing, some suggesting that he is leading as debauched a life as ever, others saying that he has left Shanghai and moved further south, whilst yet others say that he is still in Shanghai, has married and settled down. One of the characters, Lao Hui, comments: "What I think is this although the news is comically contradictory, yet that yet anything is possible." It would seem from the conclusion to this story that Zhang was suggesting that for the intellectual 'thinking man as hero' at this time many avenues were open, but what Zhang does not, however, do is to suggest a course that he believes to be acceptable and desirable. We must look to his descriptions of proletarian life to find examples of decisive and uncompromising action.

In 'Three Brothers', the story concludes with the enigmatic remark: 'Subsequently Wang Qi did not often attend classes. Later on, after the summer holidays were over, he did not come to this place again.' What exactly Wang Qi has decided to do is left a mystery, but the indications are that his life-style has undergone some fundamental change.

It is the distinctive characteristic of Zhang's portraits of the educated petit-bourgeoisie that these characters are all weak. We will find this to be true of all his creations including his last three rightly famous caricatures of the

educated petit-bourgeoisie (to be found in his collection Suxie sanpian 《速写三篇》) Mr. Tan jiu 谭九先生, Mr. Hua Wei 华威先生¹ and Mr. Li Yimo 李逸漠先生, the leading character in 'New Life' 「新生」.

We will however shortly find that Zhang's depiction of the petit-bourgeoisie was not limited to their introspective reflections on their relationship with society for in 1931 he produced witty stories revealing the petit-bourgeoisie at play such as 'Lackadaisical Love Story' 稀松的恋爱故事, and 'Pig-gut's Chagrin' 猪肠子的悲哀.

'The Twenty-one': a story of agitation with a group focus.

Zhang's next story, 'The Twenty-one' 二十一个,² marked a turning-point in Zhang's development as a writer according to some contemporary critics. They also picked out this story as the one which brought Zhang Tianyi to the attention of the reading public.³

'The Twenty-one' is the first story of a group of stories to be written in a new style. As has already been pointed out, this type of story was labelled by C. T. Hsia as 'agitational'. Apart from the quality of incitement to action that is to be found in this story and other stories of its type such as 'The Bread Queue', 'The Last Train', 'Hate' and 'The Road', other distinguishing qualities can also be discerned.

1 Even Mr. Hua Wei's apparent strength proves ultimately to be self-delusory.

2 Wenxue shenghuo 1:1 (1. 3. 1931).

3 These points were first made by Li Yishui 李易水 in his review article 'Xinren Zhang Tianyi de zuopin' 新人张天翼的作品, Beidou 1:1 (20. 9. 1931) and was reiterated by Hu Feng 胡风 in his article 'Zhang Tianyi lun' 张天翼论 which appeared in his collection of essays Wenyi bitan 《文艺笔谈》, Shanghai, 1936.

'The Twenty-one has a first person narrator, but much of the narrative description is told from a common generalised viewpoint, describing the feelings of both the narrator and his companions. At the opening of the story the narrator declares:

The whites of everyone's eyes had become bloodshot
As soon as they had had something to eat or drink,
everyone lay down.

In the early part of the story, the narrator gives the appearance of being somewhat distanced from the action that he is describing. It is only with the reference by the narrator to one of his companions as "brother" 兄弟 that it becomes clear that the narrator is one of the number whom he is describing. Later on in the story the narrator is wounded in battle, falls down and passes out. It is only then that his description becomes personalised and deals specifically with the narrator's individual concerns and feelings. When the narrator comes round he finds his friend and comrade-in-arms Shen Zhenguo 沈振国 pouring water on his head. Shen binds his wounds for him. This is, however, only a temporary lapse into self-description on the part of the narrator and it is not long before he continues with his more detached and generalised descriptions of the group.

The story itself, to state it briefly, describes a company of soldiers ordered to take up a defensive position in the path of the advancing enemy. Hand-to-hand fighting ensues and there are many casualties on both sides. Those who have survived the battle assemble themselves and heads are counted. Twenty-one soldiers are left not including their two officers. The company commander attempts to rally his men but an undercurrent of resentment runs through them. The narrator's friend Shen Zhenguo gives expression to the mood of the men and a mutiny ensues. The company commander succeeds in running away but the other officer is shot by the angry men. The end of the story leaves the reader uncertain as to what will happen to these twenty-one disgruntled soldiers. Will they be court-martialled or shot for mutinying and deserting?

The feeling of camaraderie amongst the men is particularly

noticeable in this story and it is a characteristic of this type of story that we will notice again in the stories 'The Bread Queue' and 'Hate'. The mutiny seems to be the result of a general realisation by the men that those in command have led them into danger and the outcome has been the death of many soldiers on both sides of the fray. This feeling that the officers are the villains of the piece is further reinforced in the reader's mind by an incident that occurs after the mutiny and the flight of the company commander: one of the enemy soldiers is discovered to be lying alive in the blood and mire. Rather than killing him as an enemy, the twenty-one survivors of the battle look on him as one of their own kind and help him to get up. This theme of realising that the person one had thought of as one's enemy is no different from oneself recurs in the later story 'Hate'.

This story comes closest to being didactic near the end when the narrator describes the feeling of camaraderie amongst the survivors:

Everyone gathered together to leave, everyone was as though joined together by a piece of skin, no-one could be parted from anyone else, for once parted they would cease to have existence.

Contemporary criticism of Zhang's early realist fiction.

The literary critic Li Yishui wrote a critical article about Zhang entitled 'The new man Zhang Tianyi's literary works'¹ and based his critical assessment on the seven short stories discussed above: 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days', 'Retaliation', 'From Emptiness to Fullness', 'The Three Brothers', 'After moving House', 'San taiye and Guisheng' and 'The Twenty-one'. Li Yishui picked out for special praise the last of these works 'The Twenty-one' suggesting that the other stories tend to have defects: 'San taiye and Guisheng', for example, does not give the reader a "tangible picture of peasant life and peasants"; 'After moving House', gives no clear insight into the activities

¹ Beidou 1:1 (20. 9. 1931) 89-93.

and objectives of the adult revolutionaries. Li Yishui also makes the observation that even the more progressive writers of earlier generations tended when portraying characters outside their social milieu to dream them up in their imagination rather than describing 'living' people. Although Zhang is guilty of such defects, there are, according to Li, signs in these stories, and particularly the last three stories which do not deal with the educated petit-bourgeoisie, that Zhang is a writer whose horizons are widening, and given the right material, he should go on to perfect his creative art.

'A Diary of Ghostland': Zhang's first published attempt at extended fiction.

In the final section of Li Yishui's review article, there is a discussion of Zhang's 'A Diary of Ghostland'. ^{鬼土日记} Li says of the work: "'A Diary of Ghostland' is a microcosmic portrait of an unadulterated capitalist society - a microcosmic portrait based on caricature." Where 'A Diary of Ghostland' fails according to Li is in its lack of a recognisable target: "we do not know which type of democratic country, or which capitalist system is being satirised, and as a result it loses its value as a work of satirical literature." The thrust of Li's argument appears to be that Zhang in writing 'A Diary of Ghostland' was attempting a project beyond the scope of his youthful capabilities.

The text of 'A Diary of Ghostland' runs to 156 pages in volume 2 of the 1945 edition of the collection Jirenji (Liangyou Book Company, Shanghai). The 'novel' consists of 44 undated diary entries written by Han Shiqian 韩士谦 during a visit to Ghostland. The Diary entry format is one that Zhang used before in his short stories 'The Black Smile' and 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days'; it is an unoriginal vehicle for Zhang's material. In an attempt to reduce the artificiality of the medium, the work opens with an introductory, explanatory

1 Apparently serialised in 1930 in the periodical Youzhi zhoukan, 《幼稚周刊》 this work was first published in book form by the Zhengwu shuju 正午书局, Shanghai in 1931. Usually described as a novel 长篇小说, Li Yishui classifies it as a 'middle-length work of fiction' 中篇小说.

letter written by Han to the 'author' offering his diary as material that might possibly be worked up into a piece of literature. It will be remembered that a similar blurring of the precise identity of the author was a technique used in the piece 'Bad Dream', the only difference being that the disowning remark appears in the very last line of 'Bad Dream' whereas Han's letter to the 'author' occurs before the story proper commences in 'A Diary of Ghostland'.

'A Diary of Ghostland' describes in an imaginative and sometimes hilarious way a society characterised by strange social customs, class divisions, a nefarious parliamentary system and duplicitous political manoeuvrings. Where unfortunately it fails is in trying to encompass too much material. In opting for the diary-entry format Zhang gave himself a free hand to include any material that suited his satirical bent. The consequence of this freedom is that 'A Diary of Ghostland' satirises capitalism at one moment, democracy at another and Chinese modern romantic literature at a third. The reader is left wondering what parody of early twentieth century life the hapless narrator will describe next. Disorganised though this chronicle of the world's ills seems to be, there is, however, a plot thread running through the diary entries. This thread has as its common unifying element a presidential election contested by two opposed political factions, one advocating squatting toilets, the other advocating the sitting variety. There are two candidates for president: Dong Fangdan 东方旦, who is supported by Yan Jun 严俊; and Ba Shandou 巴山豆, who is supported by wealthy patrons Lu Lelao 陆乐劳 and Pan Luo 潘洛, members of the sitting toilet party. The sitting party plan, on gaining presidential power, to convert all comfort stations to sitting toilets. They also want to sign a treaty with a neighbouring country called Lampi in order to safeguard Ghostland's textile industry. On the day of the presidential election, the narrator Han and his friend Xiao Zhongne 萧仲纳 attend the election proceedings. The rich patrons of the two presidential candidates make speeches in support of their respective protégés, then Yan, Lu and Pan play a game of poker to decide who will win

the election. In the course of the game, Yan Jun is told by his banker that he has exhausted his financial resources. Thus Ba Shandou, the sitting party candidate, is deemed to be the winner by default. Magnanimously, Lu and Pan allow Yan Jun to retain a large part of the fortune he has just gambled away. A celebratory banquet is held at the presidential palace. During the course of the banquet leaflets are found on the floor of the dining hall denouncing "gambling" politics and rigged elections.¹ The new president immediately orders the special branch to investigate the source of the leaflets. Some time later, rumours that the new government has signed a secret treaty with Lampi are reported in the press and there seems every likelihood that war will break out as a result. News comes that there has been a mutiny at the strategic town of Luyin 绿阴. Yan Jun is sent to sort out the trouble. War is averted by calls for peace amongst the populace. It is announced that a peace conference is to be held. Meanwhile the squatting party threaten to ask the government difficult questions in parliament. They declare that 79% of the population are suffering from bowel disorders as a result of the change from squatting to sitting toilets. When the peace conference rally is held there are shouts of "Down with Lu! Down with Pan!" At a meeting of parliament attended by the narrator Han and his friend Xiao, fighting breaks out when a social taboo is infringed as a representative of the sitting party tears off the nose covering of a squatting party representative. The session ends in disorder with calls for the dissolution of parliament. At Lu's mansion, the leading lights of the sitting party plot how to discredit Yan Jun in the eyes of the public, after a secret dispatch arrives revealing that the banks are supporting Yan Jun's plans to expand oil production. A priest called Zhu Shen'en 朱神恩 offers to take responsibility for spreading false rumours about Yan Jun. A few days later Xiao comes to Han with the news that Yan Jun and priest Zhu were the master-

1. This would appear to be a thinly-veiled allusion to the activities of Cao Kun 曹錕 (1862-1938) who in 1922 paid 5,000 silver dollars to each of 590 'parliamentarians' 国会议员 in order to buy their support and have himself elected president 大总统, for which he earned the accolade 'bribe-elected president' 贿选总统.

minds behind the plot to undermine the government and effect the dissolution of parliament. Public opinion turns against the government and Lu and Pan are discredited. The narrator's friend Xiao becomes frightened when Yan Jun and the bankers call for the arrest of all lackeys of Lu and Pan. The narrator Han decides it is time to return to the real world because of the change of government.

The above brief sketch accounts for the main thread of the plot of 'A Diary of Ghostland', but does nothing to describe the many subplots, diversions and caricatures that litter the text. To attempt partial justice to these aspects of the work, I shall describe the striking aspects of the work that lie outside the main plot.

Zhang like many other satirists before him (notably Swift and Voltaire) uses the technique of exaggeration to achieve his satirical effects. Certain aspects of Ghostland society resemble Western capitalist society, but these aspects are transformed until they become grotesque parodies of the things that are being satirised. Ghostland has, for instance, a class system according to which the upper classes live above ground and the lower classes live below ground level. The lower classes provide the servants and it is only when servants are waiting on their masters that they are allowed to come above ground level. In another incident the Western custom of pampering pets is the satirical objective. A couple of dogs that had been raised by a Ghostland millionaire are escorted by six servants to a Turkish bath, where the dogs loll on chaises-longues whilst the servants wait on. As the work unfolds, the satire becomes increasingly farcical: guests at a wedding reception line up holding opium pipes and an old shoe filled with rice, black paper flowers and cigarette-butts is tipped confetti-like over the newly-weds. The formality of a Western banquet is ridiculed by describing a banquet at which the guests eat their food according to a fixed order of movements shouted out by a master of ceremonies. Only when the command to rest for three minutes comes are the guests able to eat, drink and smoke as they would wish.

As though conscious that the parodies of aspects of Western society may occasionally lose sight of the object of satire, the narrator is reminded by his friend Xiao Zhongne on several occasions that though certain of the things that he observes in Ghostland may strike him as strange they are really little different from the things to be found in the real world 卅世 .

Another technique, employed by Zhang combining satire with didacticism, was the placing of discordant examples in close proximity in order to point up incongruities. A good example of this method is to be found when the narrator Han recalls some newspaper articles that he has read in his daily paper. He notices first an article describing the visit of Pan Luo's dogs to the Turkish Bath (an incident already described above). On the same page he also comes across an article that tells of a collapse at a candle factory which killed several workers. The stark difference between decadence and disaster that this example points up is achieved by contrast and juxtaposition. Though there is no comment on this incongruity by either the author or the narrator, the contrast is nonetheless poignant.

Apart from curious social customs, like the covering of noses with a piece of material because the nose is thought to be like a sexual organ by the inhabitants of Ghostland, other aspects of Ghostland society that are highlighted by the narrator include hypocrisy, intolerance, decadence and immorality. Hypocrisy is best illustrated by the following incident: one of Ghostland's millionaires, Lu Lelao 陆乐劳 arrives at a big reception. He is the guest of honour and he arrives in the first limousine of a fifteen-car cavalcade. He is accompanied by secretaries and carloads of bodyguards. Lu claims to be a commoner but the treatment he receives is anything but ordinary. As he arrives at the reception a red carpet is rolled out for him to walk on. When he reaches the hall where the reception is being held he is handed a broom and he sweeps the floor for 30 seconds. This token proletarian gesture on Lu's part is seen for what it is when he shortly afterwards presses a bell and orders one of his servants to bring a drink to him even though his glass is standing untouched on the table

next to him. A few moments later he rings the bell again and orders his servant to brush the cigarette ash off his sleeve.

Intolerance is best illustrated by press censorship and suppression of any information contrary to the interests of Ghostland's ruling party. The discovery of copies of the subversive pamphlet found on the floor of the dining room during the course of the celebratory banquet in honour of the new president's election victory is not reported in Ghostland's newspapers. On another occasion, newspaper reports of a meeting attended by the narrator do not tally with events as witnessed by him.

Decadence and degeneracy are clearly apparent in a description of an extraordinary meeting of the Commoners' Club 平民俱樂部 held at Lu Lelao's mansion. During the course of the meeting the priest Zhu Shen'en reveals that he has received reports about spies infiltrating Ghostland and investigating the details of the secret accord with the country called Lampi. When the priest burps several times, Lu as host calls for whisky. When the members of the Commoners' Club are all a little tipsy, they summon their mistresses 假乖乖. These women behave like prostitutes. Those members without women play poker. The mistress of the priest Zhu sits on his lap. The priest lifts up her nose flap and fondles her nose, an activity which is socially taboo. The others copy what the priest does. The couples dance and drink and finally the women sing and perform a striptease. After they have put their clothes back on, they present each man with an itemised bill for their services. The services are divided into the following categories: embracing and kissing 接吻; fondling the nose 摸鼻; dance partnering 陪舞; and singing and dancing 歌舞.¹

The curious morality practiced in Ghostland is revealed when the narrator describes a visit to a marriage broker that he makes with a friend of Xiao who is looking for a mate. Their car draws up outside the Hehe Introduction Bureau 和合介绍处 and the two men go into a room where a

¹ cf. itemisation in 'Lackadaisical Love Story'.

lot of pretty young women are sitting about on chairs. They are well-dressed and well made-up and are wearing numbers round their necks. When the narrator's companion chooses number 13, the major-domo reads out the girl's curriculum vitae. The girl who wears No.13 turns down the proposal of marriage on the grounds that her would-be husband is a politician and she only likes literary men. After visiting another two marriage brokers, Han's companion finally chooses girl No.52 and though she agrees to marry him, they haggle over the percentage that she is to receive. After much wrangling they finally agree on a compromise figure. Then, on an instruction from the major-domo "Express your feelings!" "抒情", the couple embrace, kiss and say romantic sweet-nothings to one another, finally ending in unison: ".... our two souls will melt together and we will become one body: oh, oh, Love is best!" (".... 我们两个灵魂融在一处, 我们合为一体了: 啊啊 Love is best!") Having been witness to this liaison, the narrator cannot help commenting that the behaviour of the couple looks stilted and it is as though they are acting out a play. Occasionally during the course of this work, comments by the narrator like the one just mentioned assist the reader's understanding of the author's viewpoint and didactic purpose. In this case, the author's standpoint becomes even clearer, for when the narrator returns home he vents his feelings about what he has just seen to his friend Xiao, declaring vehemently: "This simply degrades women! This treats women as commodities" ("这简直侮辱女性! 将女性当作商品,") Xiao, however, suggests that Ghostland's economic exploitation of women is not demonstrably different from what goes on in the real world.¹

The society portrayed in Ghostland suggests a cynical attitude on the part of the author/narrator with regard to the influence of newspapers upon society. On one occasion in

¹ It is worth noting that Zhang returns to the theme of the exploitation of women in his short story 'The Smile' 笑, Xiandai 5:4 (1. 8. 1934), and the story 'Back and Breasts' 脊背与奶子, LiangyouBook Co., Shanghai (19. 2. 1933) actually describes one woman's successful escape from exploitation and oppression.

'A Diary of Ghostland' the gentlemen of Ghostland's press are handsomely bribed by one of the sitting party millionaires to write articles in a way sympathetic to the sitting party. We have already noted above the narrator's surprise when a meeting that he has attended is reported quite differently in the newspapers the following day. On another occasion, Ba Shandou, in a press conference held early on in the election campaign, deliberately exaggerates rumours of a plot by the lower classes to infiltrate the upper classes when addressing the press. When the press have left and Ba Shandou is questioned by Lu Lelao about the degree of seriousness of this rumoured threat, Ba answers: "It is of course best to put it like this to journalists, so as to attract people's attention" (『对记者说话当然只好这样,好叫大家注意...』)

The implication behind the references to newspapers and newspaper reporting in 'A Diary of Ghostland' is their ability to manipulate and be manipulated; carefully controlled propaganda in newspapers can thus be used to orchestrate society.

Another example of control by the ruling classes in Ghostland is the system whereby writers are controlled by the state. According to this system all writers are required to register with the state before they are allowed to publish.

The economic exploitation of woman already mentioned above is not the only example of social iniquity to be found in 'A Diary of Ghostland'. Another notable example is denial of higher education to the lower classes. The social system in Ghostland is geared to the perpetuation of the class system and to the retention of power in the hands of the upper classes. To this end, success and power depend entirely on wealth and only those with sufficient funds are able to attend university in Ghostland. In the early part of the work it appears that political power is in the hands of the three wealthy commoners Lu, Pan and Yan, but in the final analysis these three powerful men are themselves under the thumb of the banks who can oust the rulers of the day and replace them with yesterday's opposition.

The political and social system of Ghostland is described with

a measure of cynicism, but this cynicism is as nothing when compared with the fiercely sarcastic descriptions of the words and actions of the Christian priest Zhu Shen'en. When the priest is involved in disputation about the evolution of the human race, he puts forward a fundamentalist Christian viewpoint, saying that according to the Bible we are all descended from Adam and Eve, or as he comically corrects himself: ".... no, we should say Eve's name first because cultured people show respect for ladies" (「.... 不, 我们应当先说夏娃的名字, 因为文明人是尊重女性的....」)

He goes on to say that the biblical evidence is based on scientific fact and in a vain effort to make his claims appear more plausible, he proceeds to describe a meeting he had with Jehovah: "He [Jehovah] had just finished lunch, and Abraham collected up his knife and fork." (「.... 那时他刚吃过中饭, 亚伯拉罕给他收拾刀叉....」). On an earlier occasion Zhu Shen'en had claimed to be in direct communication with Jesus. Hearing this, a newspaper reporter was prompted to ask what Jesus looked like. The priest answered: "He is still wearing a crown of thorns, and is clothed in a purple cloak, and above his head there is a halo." (「.... 他还带着荆冠, 身着紫袍, 头上有个 Halo」).

When asked what language Jesus spoke, he answered after a pause: "Chinese". When his interlocutor expressed surprise, the priest went on to explain: "Yes, Chinese, and what is more he also has a bit of a Cantonese accent." (「是的, 支那话, 并且还带点广东口音」).

Apart from Ghostland's political circles, the narrator also gets to know literary figures through introductions from his friend Xiao, himself a writer. The portraits of Sima Xidu 司马吸毒 and Hei Lingling 黑灵灵 are marvellous caricatures of pretentious literary types. Sima Xidu is described as an expert on literature of the decadent school 颓废派文学专家. He has deliberately pursued the kind of existence that leads to neurasthenia; he drinks heavily, smokes opium and sleeps too little, all in the interest of being a literary expert. Hei Lingling, on the other hand, is termed an

expert on the extreme symbolist school of literature 极度象征派文学专家 . He talks gobbledygook which is most amusing and totally incomprehensible to the narrator. This is one example:

"I think this afternoon, we will be able to drop the intestines of the golden fly onto the grade five striped tiger seal of the nightingale, and also we will go and see whether golden toothed humour can obtain the white rose of the leather bag, or whether it can obtain the ink-bottle of the nine-tailed fox's mother." (『我着.... 今天下午, 我们就可以把金色的苍蝇的肠子落在夜莺的五等文虎章上, 并且要去着金牙齿的幽默得不到皮包的白玫瑰, 得不到九尾狐的母亲的水瓶。』)

These two portraits of Ghostland literary types mark a high point in the work and point the way ahead for Zhang's characterisations in subsequent short stories as well as longer fantastical works like Golden Duck Empire 《金鸭帝国》.¹ The techniques of exaggeration and seizing upon a distinctive characteristic to which repeated attention is drawn are the two techniques most commonly employed in Zhang's later works.

Sima Xidu and Hei Lingling can be seen as outrageous extrapolations of literary types to be found in China in the late twenties and early thirties. These two caricatures are part of an attack waged throughout 'A Diary of Ghostland' on the romantic school of writers in the May Fourth era. Another thinly veiled attack is contained in the description of a visit paid by the narrator to the two universities of Ghostland's capital: The State Arts University 国立文艺大学; and the State Capital University 国立都会大学. The Arts University is for those who espouse the romantic cause. In the main lecture hall, there are all kinds of different chairs arranged haphazardly about the hall. The rooms in the hall of residence use different systems of numbering and are not in sequence.

¹ Serialised in Wenxue zazhi 1:1 - 2:6 (15. 1. 1942 - 1. 11. 1943)

The implication is that for romanticists, disorganisation is a valid end in itself. In another example, a writer called Wanye 万爷 is described at work on a romantic novel. In the middle of a luncheon party, Wanye suddenly bursts out: "All of a sudden inspiration has come to me" (「我突然 Inspiration 来了»). He then hurries off to write the conclusion to his romantic novel before he loses this inspiration. An integral part of his method of composition is to throw a pair of dice. On one die the following words are inscribed: an actress; a girl full of sorrow and illness; a poetess; a princess; a girl student; and a prostitute. The other die has on it: an actor; a boy full of sorrow and illness; a poet; a prince; a male teacher; and a playboy. (女伶, 多愁多病的女子, 女诗人, 公主, 女学生, 妓女; 男伶, 多愁多病的男子, 男诗人, 王子, 男教员, 相公)

The dice are thrown to determine the participants in the novel. All the examples of romantic school characters and their activities that have been outlined above suggest that Zhang held his romanticist contemporaries in considerable contempt and considered their approach to literary creativity as haphazard.

'A Diary of Ghostland' is an interesting if not entirely successful first attempt by Zhang to use a broader canvas. Not surprisingly it elicited indifferent reviews by contemporaries Li Yishui and Qu Qiubai.¹ Li's points have been referred to above; Qu's criticisms though not dissimilar are couched in more tongue-in-cheek terms. Qu implies that Zhang's satirical objectives are too vague, too unspecific, and he advocates realism rather than using a fantasy scenario, and if one is bent on using a fantasy scenario, then it is better to use the animal kingdom as one's setting, rather than a land peopled by shadowy ghosts.

¹ Qu writing under the pseudonym Dong Long 董龙 wrote a review article entitled 'Hua gou ba' 画狗罢 in Beidou 1:1 (12. 9. 1931).

Zhang's old friend and fellow writer Wang Xiyan¹ writing more recently is more generous in his assessment of the place of 'A Diary of Ghostland' in Zhang's development:

"Starting with 'A Diary of Ghostland', Zhang Tianyi elicited peoples' praise because of his ability at fairly pungent satire. His satirical targets were mainly intellectuals buried in the morass of indecision, contradiction and hypocrisy, and the urban petit-bourgeoisie who led a banal, dull existence."

(从《鬼土日记》起，张天翼是以他的颇为波辣的讽刺才能受人称道的。他讽刺的矛头，主要是对着一些陷入动摇、矛盾、虚伪的泥淖中的知识分子，一些过惯庸俗灰暗生活的小市民。)

'A Diary of Ghostland' may well owe some of its inspiration to Shen Congwen's Alice's Travels in China 《阿丽思中国游记》 which was published by the Xinyue Publishing House 新月出版社 in 1928, and it probably pointed the way for Lao She's Cat Country 《猫城记》，a biting satire of contemporary China, its people, customs and institutions which was published in 1933 by the Xiandai Book Company 现代书局, Shanghai.

The rise and fall of Deng Bingsheng: 'The Leather Belt'

Zhang's next story, 'The Leather Belt' 皮带², deals with characters who are anything but shadowy ghosts. The main character, Deng Bingsheng 邓炳生, makes use of tenuous family connections to secure a commission in a military establishment commanded by a distant relative. The story traces Deng's brief advance through the hierarchy, his relationship with his various colleagues, and his eventual demise.

¹ See his article 'Mianlin Sadan de tiaozhan' 面临撒旦的挑战 in Furong 3 (9. 1981) 216-228.

² Qingnianjie 1:5 (10. 7. 1931).

This story, though short, is nonetheless divided into five sections. The start of each new section marks the picking up of the story after an interval of time has elapsed since the end of the previous section. The sections obey a chronological sequence.

The personages in this story are not of the educated class that have mostly populated Zhang's earlier realist stories. They are rather the ill educated petit-bourgeoisie or 'xiaoshimin' 小市民 that appear in subsequent works like One year 《一年》,¹ and 'Lu Baotian' 陸宝田.² 'The Leather Belt' would seem to be based on Zhang's experiences whilst briefly employed in a military unit in 1928 or 1929.³

The first section of the story opens with Deng Bingsheng's arrival at a military camp and his seeking out of the camp commander Liang chuzhang 梁处长, to whose wife he is distantly related. Since Liang chuzhang's quarters are already full, Deng finds himself relegated to sharing a room in the barracks with a junior N.C.O. 上士. Deng thus has a place to stay, but no salaried position is forthcoming.

In the second section, two weeks have already passed since Deng Bingsheng's arrival at camp. His family have written to ask him to send money home. He writes back asking them not to bother him with letters of this kind since he is having trouble finding a post. Liang chuzhang has told him to be patient and has promised to advance him when the opportunity arises. Whilst impatiently waiting for advancement, Deng starts to make friends with the N.C.O.s with whom he associates, and begins to adopt their attitudes and manner of speech.

1 Liangyou Publishing Company, Shanghai (1. 1. 1933).

2 Wencong 1:1 (20. 3. 1937).

3 Jiang Muliang 蒋牧良 in a reminiscence about his friend Zhang entitled 'Ji Zhang Tianyi' 记张天翼 in Wenyi shenghuo Overseas Edition (7. 1948) recalls a time when the two of them worked as clerks in an office of the Military Government in Nanjing. Though the precise date of this occurrence is not alluded to, it is likely to have been in the late 1920s or early 1930s and probably helped to provide background and material for stories and longer works dealing with the urban petit-bourgeoisie.

On one occasion, one of the soldiers recounts a story about another soldier on orderly duty who was dismissed for refusing to make tea for an officer. Deng Bingsheng, taking the part of the soldier, is incensed by this 'injustice' and wishes he could shoot the officer concerned. Fed up with his failure to make any progress, Deng seeks out Liang chuzhang's wife and prevails upon her to put in a good word for him. He says he is willing to accept any post.

In the third section, just as Deng Bingsheng is beginning to despair, he is given a post. Cock-a-hoop at finding himself on the ladder of advancement, Deng feels that now all things are possible. He moves in with an officer Xie zhongwei 薛中尉 and abruptly severs his former friendly connections with the N.C.O.s. He is preoccupied with fantasies about promotion.

In the fourth section, the reader finds Deng Bingsheng decked out in new clothes and lording it over the soldiers who used to be his friends. He mimics the distinctive manner of one of his fellow officers in dealing with soldiers, a manner which he thought strange when first he arrived at the camp. Deng Bingsheng works hard at his new job and does his best to ingratiate himself with his superiors. He regrets his former friendliness with the lower ranks.

In the final section of the story, Deng's world suddenly collapses. His patron, Liang chuzhang, is moved to another post. His successor has his own staff. Liang chuzhang's hangers-on all get their marching orders. Ironically, the same messenger who brought Deng Bingsheng his original commission now brings notice of his dismissal.

It is interesting to note that though this story appeared in July, 1931 and the novel One Year did not come out until the first day of 1933, almost all of the incidents described in the earlier short story can be found in the later novel. Bearing in mind that Zhang wrote in the postface to One Year that much of the novel was first written in 1929 and revised and partially rewritten in 1932, it seems quite likely that the experiences

and incidents that provided Zhang with the material to write One Year probably occurred in 1928 or early 1929. The striking parallels between 'The Leather Belt' and One Year make it likely that Zhang, using the novel like an author's notebook, extracted material from the novel to use as grist for the short story. One Year is a long, rambling, ill-constructed novel and does not show the author/narrator mastering his material in the way that Zhang does in 'The Leather Belt'. Whilst the material used in the two works is very similar, the purposes behind them are very different. The scale and scope of One Year are both grand, whereas 'The Leather Belt' has been trimmed and polished for one sharp, concentrated effect.

The points of similarity between 'The Leather Belt' and One Year are as follows. First, Deng Bingsheng resembles Bai Muyi 白慕易 in One Year in that they both seek advancement and both meet with failure after initial success. Bai Muyi seeks an appointment at a military establishment by making use of his familial connections. Working first as an N.C.O. 上士, he mixes with soldiers from the less refined elements of society and has his corners knocked off as a result. Later in the novel, he experiences a raise in status and one day is embarrassed in the street when hailed by one of his former N.C.O. friends, feeling shame at the reminder of his humbler beginnings. This parallels Deng's disdain for and rejection of his former friends in the ranks. Bai, like Deng, suddenly loses his position as a result of a change in command. Both Bai and Deng are vain and set great store by the material trimmings of success.

Apart from similarities in plot incident, there are also structural similarities in the narrative. Bai Muyi eventually makes friends with his N.C.O. colleagues and becomes one of them. This prompts the narrator to address the reader thus:

If you were to meet Bai Muyi again, you would not recognise him. After only a few months, he is drinking and playing mahjong with them, and he has learned the everyday vocabulary used in conversation by his fellows.

(你要是再遇见白慕易，你要不认得他的。不过几个月工夫，他跟他们喝酒，推牌九，学会了弟兄们谈话中常用的术语。)

This passage in One Year bears a close resemblance to the opening part of section four of 'The Leather Belt':

Now it is just three months since Mr. Bingsheng took up his appointment. I really must, however, reintroduce Mr. Bingsheng once more to my readers, because if you were to see Mr. Bingsheng now, you would certainly not be able to recognise him.

(现在炳生先生到差只三个月。可是我定得把炳生先生向读者再介绍一遍，因为你现在要是见了炳生先生，决不会认得他的。)

'The Leather Belt' is just one of several stories by Zhang that describe insignificant, ordinary men trying desperately to better themselves in a society where only the most able and ruthless prosper. What is said of Deng Bingsheng — that he 'is only interested in clawing his way up to being a slightly "loftier" person' — can equally well be applied to most of the characters in the novel One Year, such as Bai Muyi, his cousin Bai Jun 白骏, their pathetic uncle Liang Meixuan 梁梅轩 and the incorrigible rogue Li Yitai 李益泰. Their various efforts to better themselves produce different degrees of success and failure, but they do generally cut sad, vain figures. Zhang's portrait of Deng Bingsheng is particularly incisive and rounded; carefully accumulated incidents draw the reader's attention to the weaknesses in Deng's character and the reader's interest in Deng is allowed to be diverted for no more than a moment. The inner workings of Deng's mind are also presented to the reader by the narrator; this was a method Zhang made only occasional use of in the novel One Year. Zhang's portrait of Bai Muyi, whilst similar to that of Deng Bingsheng, is less effective because it is diffused within the larger canvas of the novel.

'Little Peter': a study in industrial relations.

Zhang's subsequent publication, entitled 'Little Peter' 小彼得¹ provoked an adverse response from Lu

¹ Xiaoshuo yuebao 22:10 (10. 1931).

Xun.¹ Using rather elliptical language, Lu Xun observed:
 "Your works sometimes suffer from being slick; this is what I said at the time that 'Little Peter' was published, I certainly cannot say such a thing now. As I see it, your works have sobered up. But there is also another failing, namely sometimes they are harmed as a result of being long-winded."

(你的作品有时失之油滑,是发表《小彼得》那时说的,现在并没有说;据我看,是切实起来了。但又有有一个缺点,是有时伤于冗长。)

Exactly what Lu Xun meant by the word 'youhua' 油滑² in the context of Zhang's works is not clear (and it is probably unwise to attach too much significance to the word), but some indication of what Lu Xun meant can be gleaned from the word he used to describe Zhang's subsequently improved state, 'qieshi' (切实 'in earnest', 'realistic'). Be that as it may, what is certain is that 'Little Peter' constitutes a new strand in Zhang's creative development. This story deals not with intellectuals, nor with children, nor with soldiers, nor with minor functionaries like Deng Bingsheng, but rather with the world of the factory. In terms of a conflict between those in authority and those who obey commands 'Little Peter' bears certain similarities with the earlier story 'The Twenty-one', but the setting is very different.

Little Peter, the eponymous hero, is a small dog belonging to the owner of a factory. Usually the dog stays in the luxurious office of the factory owner, lazing in the thick pile of the carpet and occasionally treated to champagne by its doting owner.³ From time to time, Peter sallies forth into

¹ Lu Xun in a letter to Zhang dated 1 February, 1933 refers to an earlier remark he had made about 'Little Peter'. It is not clear, however, whether Lu Xun was referring specifically to the short story entitled 'Little Peter' or generally to all the stories published in a collection with that title including: 'Little Peter'; 'The Leather Belt'; 'The Twenty-one'; 'Lackadaisical Love Story'; 'The Bread Queue'; 'A Man in Search of Stimulation'; and 'Pig-gut's Chagrin'.

² C. T. Hsia translates 'youhua' as 'frivolous'; History of Modern Chinese Literature, 227.

³ cf. dogs waited on by servants in 'A Diary of Ghostland'.

the factory where he is confronted by the workers on the factory floor who have names like Lao ba 老八, A Song 阿松 and Suisheng 遂生. The mere sight of Little Peter engenders hatred in the hearts of these workers; this hatred of the dog is presumably a sublimation of their hatred for the factory owner who exploits their labour, though this point is not made explicit by the author/narrator. Whenever Little Peter appears on the factory floor, the workers find ways to taunt and vex the little dog. They throw stones at him and try unsuccessfully to make him eat something that will make him sick.

On one occasion Little Peter is hit and cut by a stone thrown by one of the workers. This prompts the angry factory owner to issue a threat saying that any worker who harms his dog will be reported to the police. This has the effect of increasing the feeling of animosity towards the dog that already exists amongst the workers. They resolve to find a way of making Little Peter eat his own excrement. For a long time the dog hides in the boss's office, but one day he does wander onto the factory floor. A Song catches him and ties him up. The men assemble in the boiler room and argue about what they are going to do to the dog. Eventually Lao ba puts the frightened dog on top of a pile of coal and makes to hit it with a shovel, presumably with the intention of making the dog so frightened that it will involuntarily excrete. As it happens, he miscalculates and the dog's head is smashed open by the shovel. In order to cover up his miscalculation, Lao ba brings the shovel down a second time and finishes the dog off.

The excited workers then joke about what they shall do with the dog now that he is dead. One worker even suggests that they should eat Little Peter. A Song, however, takes charge of the situation and shovels Little Peter into the furnace. The story ends with this description of the workers returning home at the end of their shift:

They felt elated. On the way home, however, each person became quiet: their relation lacked something and it cloaked a certain dissatisfaction as well.

"Today was jolly, wasn't it?"

"Yes And yet"

"I know."

(他们感到痛快。可是在回家的路上,各人也就默然了:那痛快有点欠缺的,而且还隐藏着什么不满足。
「今天快活吧?」
「唔.....不过.....」
「我知道。」)

The ending is elliptical and also carefully avoids a laborious and anti-climactic description of the aftermath consequent on the discovery that the dog is missing. The mood of the workers after the disposal of the dog is ambiguous and open to interpretation by the reader. It can be suggested that the workers' happiness tinged with dissatisfaction is merely a natural consequence of murdering the boss's pet dog, but it might also be suggested more darkly that this feeling of dissatisfaction implies that the workers would have felt happier if it had been the owner of the factory bound helpless and frightened on top of a pile of coal rather than his little dog.

It is worth noting at this point that C. T. Hsia accorded this story consummate praise.¹ One hesitates to suggest that C. T. Hsia's fulsome praise may have been provoked by Lu Xun's rather dismissive remark about 'Little Peter'. C. T. Hsia concludes his brief analysis with this comment: "it ['Little Peter'] still stands unchallenged as the most ironic study of capital-labor relations by a Chinese writer."² It is difficult to agree or disagree with Hsia's generalised comment, but what it does show is that analyses of this story tell us more about the critics writing them than they do about the story itself.

'Little Peter', unlike Zhang's earlier stories shows the reader two very different social classes simultaneously and to a similar depth of focus. The background of everyday factory life against which the story is told gives the reader good insights into the camaraderie amongst the workers on the factory floor, the decadence and isolation of the factory-

1 See A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, 227, 228.

2 A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, 228.

owner, and the ingratiating antics of the white-collar factory staff who are anxious to find favour with their boss. The reader, thanks to the omniscient eye of the narrator, is also privy to the fact that within the factory there exists a network of informants who betray the activities of the workers to the factory-owner.

Like the soldiers in the story 'The Twenty-one', the factory-workers in 'Little Peter' act spontaneously. They hound their boss's little dog without premeditation, acting on impulse. Though the workers seem to have common objectives, no one person in their number can be seen as their leader and their activities lack organisation and co-ordination as a consequence.

This is the only story in which Zhang overtly describes factory workers and factory life. The shadowy adults in 'After moving House' may well have worked in a factory, but the reader is not informed about this. Later in the story 'Chocolate', the elder sister of one of the boys preoccupied with the desire to taste chocolate actually works in a factory that makes chocolates, but her experiences at work are reported second-hand to the reader rather than being witnessed through the eyes of a factory-working character or by-standing narrator. In One Year, the daughter-in-law of Liang Meixuan goes to work in a Shanghai factory but the narrative does not follow her there or record her experiences there.

'A Man in Search of Stimulation': another story about the petit-bourgeoisie.

Zhang's next story entitled 'A Man in Search of Stimulation' 找寻刺激的人¹ fixes attention once more on a member of the educated petit-bourgeoisie who is distinguished by his preoccupation with romantic fantasies. Mr. Jiangzhen 江震先生, an arts graduate of two years standing, who does not appear to have a job, goes to Taozhen 陶镇 where his aunt lives, on the advice of a medical student friend, who attributes Jiangzhen's persistent skin disease to neurasthenia.

¹ Liuhuo yuekan 1:1 (1. 11. 1931); 1:2 (1. 12. 1931)

The story is divided into five numbered sections and as in 'The Leather Belt' the start of each new numbered section marks the passing of an intervening interval of time. This story too has an impersonal third-person narrator who observes the behaviour of Mr. Jiangzhen and comments on it for the benefit of the reader. The story is advanced by using the technique of quoting at length from letters that Jiangzhen addresses to a friend in which he discusses his emotional state. This is a narrative technique that we have come across in the earlier 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days', but whereas in that story the writing of letters to a friend is the sole method of narration employed, in this story the letters to a friend are only used to supplement the main impersonal third-person narrative mode. Clearly Zhang could not risk being identified with the central character in this case, whereas in the earlier story there was no such inhibition.

Apart from being unfortunate in having a nasty skin disease, Mr. Jiangzhen has also been unlucky in love. Early in the first section, the narrator explains:

As soon as he starts talking about the business of failure in love he can talk to you for a whole week without pausing for a single yawn. And he is sure to start by talking of his old-style marriage. When he was seventeen his father provided him with a flat-nosed, flat-faced wife, needless to say he not only did not love her but also felt wounded: he had always advocated that life should be vigorous, that there should be waves and storms, stimulation, and the like, but love - "but love surely should occupy the main part of life, shouldn't it?"

Whilst at university, Mr. Jiangzhen fell in love with the wife of a lawyer. Ruling out the possibility of securing a divorce, Mr. Jiangzhen finally suggested to his girlfriend that they run away together. She rejected his idea, and disconsolate Mr. Jiangzhen returned home. Four days later he received a long letter from his beloved and this signalled the end of their relationship.

After several years, Mr. Jiangzhen has still not recovered

from this blow to his heart; it is at this stage in Mr. Jiangzhen's life that the story opens. The background is imparted to the reader partly by the narrator and partly through Jiangzhen's letter to his friend. Very soon after arriving at his aunt's house, Mr. Jiangzhen decides that he has fallen in love with the maid directed by his aunt to look after him. The maid is a young woman of about twenty called Xiao Shunzi 小顺子. The rest of the story is taken up with recounting Mr. Jiangzhen's clumsy attempts to woo his maid.

Mr. Jiangzhen appears as a ridiculous figure - he is the earthbound equivalent of the romantic neurasthenic Sima Xidu in 'A Diary of Ghostland' - and someone who does not endear himself to the reader. He is in love with the idea of being in love with a prole, with its accompanying connotations of condescension and sacrifice. Given such a state of mind no real contact is possible and his affair with his maid is doomed to failure. Xiao Shunzi's earthy, no-nonsense approach to Jiangzhen's circumlocutory attempts to express his feelings make Xiao Shunzi more than a match for his unwanted attentions. Mr. Jiangzhen, for all his education and book reading, finds it hard to string more than half a dozen coherent words together. Xiao Shunzi's brisk stock answer to his questions is "Please yourself" 随便.

The story presents comically the problems posed by a relationship between two people from quite different social classes and backgrounds. Xiao Shunzi is at Mr. Jiangzhen's beck and call; all Mr. Jiangzhen has to do is to shout her name and she will come hurrying to his room. This distresses Mr. Jiangzhen who believes in equality. He wants Xiao Shunzi to regard him as an equal, as a human being just like herself, but this is not easily achieved in a situation where one person is subservient to another. Jiangzhen's attempts to make Xiao Shunzi stop calling him Young Master 少爷 do not meet with success. On one occasion Jiangzhen accidentally drops some money outside his room. Finding this money, Xiao Shunzi hurries after him with it and asks if it is his. Just as he is about to pocket the money it occurs to him to ask Xiao Shunzi if she would like the money. Xiao Shunzi indignantly throws the money down on

the ground and runs off. Later in the story Jiangzhen suggests to Xiao Shunzi that he will sell his inheritance in order to bring himself down to the same social level as herself. Xiao Shunzi however interprets his suggestion differently and asks him if he does not have it in mind to purchase her. Try as he will to convince her that they can make a success of their relationship, Xiao Shunzi consistently refuses to believe that their unequal relationship can be made equal.

As Mr. Jiangzhen becomes increasingly preoccupied with his infatuation for Xiao Shunzi, he sleeps little and only eats a couple of cornbread rolls (窝窝头) — the most proletarian of proletarian food — whenever he feels hungry. Eventually tired of the circumstances in which she is employed, Xiao Shunzi decides to take positive steps to extricate herself. Late one night, Xiao Shunzi suddenly knocks on Jiangzhen's door and announces that she is leaving on the night boat. She refuses to tell him where she is going or what she is going to do. Jiangzhen pleads to be allowed to go with her, but she steadfastly refuses. In a flat panic he throws some things into a suitcase and hurries after her. The scene painted by the narrator has the quality of a romantic comedy for as Jiangzhen stumbles to the door his suitcase opens and the books that he has hastily stuffed into his suitcase fall to the ground. Still clutching his empty suitcase he hurries after Xiao Shunzi.

All of Jiangzhen's words and actions seem to be the stuff of which sloppy romantic fiction is made. On another occasion when he is out walking with Xiao Shunzi he picks up a stone and etches the character that means 'love' on the trunk of a tree. This makes Xiao Shunzi laugh. Nonplussed by her reaction, Jiangzhen asks her why she is laughing and whether she knows this character. In answer, Xiao Shunzi says: "I think I've come across it in novels."

Any sympathy that the reader might have had for Jiangzhen gradually dissipates during the course of the story. What loses the reader's sympathy is Jiangzhen's patronising attitude towards Xiao Shunzi. Unintentional though it may be, Jiangzhen has the

unfortunate knack of giving the impression that he considers Xiao Shunzi illiterate and thus stupid. At one point, his vanity even makes him wonder if Xiao Shunzi could be impotent.

This barbed tale of a romance that attempts to bridge social divisions mocks the activities and behaviour of a member of the petit-bourgeoisie. We shall find when shortly we come to consider the story 'Lackadaisical Love Story' that a progression can be found in Zhang's satirical development as he moves from serious confrontation in 'Retribution', by way of the by turns comical, by turns serious, confrontation in 'A Man in Search of Stimulation' to the hilarious affair described in the pages of 'Lackadaisical Love Story'. Zhang's stories during the period 1929 to 1932 can be seen as stylistic experiments which often treat similar material in different ways as Zhang sought the most satisfactory vehicles for his satire. It is only after 1933 that Zhang settles to his task and produces what are arguably his finest stories which are serious in tone and approach irrespective of whether they are satirical or not. This is presumably what Lu Xun meant when he commented in his letter to Zhang of 1 February, 1933 that Zhang's work had by this time 'sobered up' '切实起来了'.

'The Bread Queue': another "agitational" story.

Zhang's next work 'The Bread Queue' 面包线¹ is in the same mould as the earlier 'The Twenty-one' and the subsequent 'Hatred', all three stories dealing with amorphous groups of disgruntled elements of the proletariat. The soldiers on campaign in 'The Twenty-one' give way to wounded soldiers recuperating in a military hospital in 'The Bread Queue'. The elements that make up the two plots are essentially the same, and the stories end in the same way: both groups of men are on the run, and the reader is in ignorance of what becomes of them.

It is true that the story has a third-person narrator, but he plays only a small part in relating the story. Most of the

1 Beidou 1:3 (20. 11. 1931).

work is done by simply recording snatches of conversation, and though most of the conversations are between the invalid soldiers who are at the centre of the reader's attention, other conversations between bystanders are apparently overheard by the narrator. In 'The Twenty-one' the third-person narrator associates himself with the group of soldiers that he is describing and sees himself as one of their number, beginning descriptive passages with the word 'we'. The narrator of 'The Bread Queue', however, gives the impression of being distanced from the action that is being described. Towards the end of the story, for example, when the wounded soldiers join with members of the proletariat to storm a grain store guarded by armed police, the narrator refers to the group of people storming the grain store as 'they' rather than 'we'.

The plot is simple enough. The wounded soldiers who are recuperating in a military hospital have time on their hands and go whoring, playing mahjong, and drinking as the mood takes them and their finances permit. Their characters are allowed to develop and each has a name. One day they happen to pass a grain shop and discover that it has sold out of all supplies of grain. This strikes them as strange since they have heard that harvests have been good this year. On their return to the hospital, the seriousness of the situation is brought home to them when they are given mantou made with brown flour for their evening meal. After a few days it becomes clear that the shortage has been artificially created by the civic authorities in order to make huge profits. When the invalid soldiers find out that the supplies of grain have apparently been stockpiled and stored in a grain-distributing depot they make their way to the depot. A large crowd has gathered outside in anticipation of the depot opening its doors. A group of armed police are on guard outside and they inform the anxious crowd that the depot will open for just one hour between three and four in the afternoon. The invalid soldiers wait with a crowd of townspeople until three o'clock. When the depot shows no sign of opening the crowd pushes forward. The police guards fire over the heads of the crowd but the crowd pushes on relentlessly, breaking down the door of the depot. Meanwhile the invalid soldiers tackle the armed guards driving them away. Inside the depot they discover

huge stocks of grain and rice. The invalid soldiers supervise the distribution of rice and grain. Worried that the police guards may shortly return with reinforcements, they shed their distinctive military hospital clothes and make their way out of the town, claiming to be members of the proletariat who live outside the east gate of the town when they are challenged by a sentry.

The story is effectively over at this point, but the narrator does add a postscript. He reports the news that is circulating in the town that night: more than one hundred people were shot in the entrance to the grain depot between four and five in the afternoon. Another snippet of news relayed by the narrator gives the reader an inkling of what has become of the group of invalid soldiers: a robbery has been reported outside the east gate of the town. This apart there is no indication as to what subsequently happens to the group of invalid soldiers.

'The Bread Queue' reiterates some of the didactic points made in 'The Twenty-one'. Emphasis is again laid on the importance of camaraderie. In an incident that adds nothing to the plot, one of the wounded soldiers who has had a leg amputated is upset when his friends suddenly decide to have a running race. When the others realise that they have left their one-legged friend behind, they are filled with remorse and do their best to cheer him up. The activities shared by the group and their constant inseparability also symbolize an underlying camaraderie.

Another similarity between this story and 'The Twenty-one' is the attitude of the wounded soldiers towards their officers. Zhou Jin 周进, one of the wounded soldiers, gives voice to his loss of faith in his officers when he says:

"If our company commander told us to open fire on civilians, I don't know whether we would or not."

"Can't say for sure," someone chimes in.

"If our general came on the scene, we would ?"

"Kill him!"

(周进向 :

"要是咱们排长叫咱们向老百姓
开枪，不知道会开不开。"

"说不定。"....

"要是咱们军长来了，咱们要....?"

"毙了他!"

One theme that we shall find recurs in the later story 'Hate', is the narrowness of the line that divides the soldiers from the proletariat. Attention is skilfully drawn to this point when the soldiers discard their military hospital clothing and pass themselves off as members of the proletariat. On another occasion in the story, the narrator showing that he has insights into the mind of Zhou Jin informs the reader that Zhou Jin worked on the land before becoming a soldier. At that time he felt hatred for soldiers and it was only his inability to support himself from farming that led him to become a soldier.

This story captures the spirit of the disorder that existed in China at the end of the 1920s. It is a spirit that pervades later stories by Zhang like 'Cheng Yeheng' which describes much the same period in China's history, that is the few years before and after the Northern Expedition (北伐) of 1926-27. The feeling of disorder communicated by the events of the plot are further intensified by the narrative method employed in this story. As pointed out above much of the story is related by recording brief snatches of conversation, giving way only occasionally to longer comments by the narrator. These staccato bursts of conversation intensify the atmosphere of agitation and disorder.

Mention must also be made of the language used by the wounded soldiers in this story. They invariably use the language of the barrack-room and almost every sentence is punctuated with at least one swear-word. This is indicative of Zhang's uncompromising desire to show life as it really was and his uncanny ability to capture the speech patterns and vocabulary of many different social classes and character types.

The decadence and decay of the educated petit-bourgeoisie:
'Pig-gut's Chagrin'.

'Pig-gut's Chagrin' 猪肠子的悲哀¹ uses a first-person narrative technique to describe a re-encounter between the narrator and an old schoolfriend. This old schoolfriend whose nickname is Pig-gut became a successful writer after leaving school. Success brought its own problems, however, and Pig-gut tells the narrator about his dependence on cigarettes and alcohol, his hedonism, and his psychological problems during a series of meetings that they arrange after their first chance re-encounter.

The story is a character study of Pig-gut, an intellectual who has run out of steam and is unable to decide what to do with his life. His success at writing fiction has made him miserable and he feels out-of-step with contemporary society because of his old-fashioned attitudes. The narrative method chosen by Zhang for this story is most appropriate to the material. The narrator is a shadowy persona, whom Pig-gut refers to as Old Zhang (老张), a name probably intended to signal the author's close identification with the narrator. Little is revealed about the narrator during the course of the story and he acts as an ear listening to Pig-gut's revelations about his recent past and his thoughts on the future. It is made to look as though the narrator is specially privileged to have an insight into Pig-gut's character since Pig-gut claims that he is only willing to reveal his true feelings to old school-friends.

A picture of Pig-gut's character builds up during the course of the story. He is a caricature of the archetypal post-May Fourth confused petit-bourgeois intellectual, beset by doubts, uncertain as to what to do with his life. After graduating from secondary school Pig-gut joined the anarchist party; later he joined the Communist Party; subsequently he withdrew from all political parties.²

1 Beidou 1:4 (20. 12. 1931).

2 This progress from anarchist to Communist calls to mind Zhang's autobiographical remarks about his early years (see Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan 1980: 2 (9. 1980) 276). As far as is known Zhang unlike Pig-gut did not withdraw from the Communist Party at any time in his life.

Pig-gut wrote some works of fiction that brought him fame, but after a while he found himself out of tune with society and stopped writing as a consequence, doing a little translation work from time to time. The impression given is that Pig-gut's frequent changes of course and lack of purpose show him to be a hollow man.

Like Jiangzhen in 'A Man in Search of Stimulation', Pig-gut too has emotional problems. He is pursuing a woman whom he does not love and whom he does not find physically attractive, simply because she is the only child of a wealthy businessman. He needs to make this kind of match if he is to maintain his big-spending life-style. He complains to the narrator that he is not happy with his life, in spite of his constant pleasure-seeking.

At the end of the story Pig-gut and the narrator go into a bookshop where Pig-gut picks up a magazine which carries an article about him that offends him. In a fit of pique he tears up the offending magazine. The article says of Pig-gut that:

Although he is afraid of falling behind the times, he has in fact already fallen behind the times. He is standing on a very thick carpet beside a warm electric fire talking about revolution and women.

Zhang's ability to write acid studies of educated petit-bourgeois characters is apparent throughout his literary development. It is first apparent in Zhang's earliest story, the brief and caustic 'New Poetry' which mocks an old stick-in-the-mud and his 'bright young thing' wife. As Zhang's literary craft developed, he started to portray members of the educated petit-bourgeoisie in various stages of degeneration. Their commitment or lack of commitment to revolution usually provides a clue to the degree of their degeneration. Mr. Jingye in 'From Emptiness to Fullness' has dealings with revolutionaries, but it is left in doubt at the end of the story as to whether he is truly committed to a revolutionary course.

Wang Qi in 'The Three Brothers' is an example of a confused petit-bourgeois student who seems to have reached a decision by

the end of the story, but what exactly he has decided to do is not revealed to the reader. Apart from the information that he has abandoned his studies, no clue is given as to the new direction in which he has turned. Pig-gut in 'Pig-gut's Chagrin', on the other hand, is too confused and spoilt to be capable of decisive action. He, like Mr. Jingye, is a pretentious dabbler in new movements, flirting briefly with each passing vogue. We shall find in Zhang's later works that the character studies of members of the petit-bourgeoisie portray individuals who are increasingly more involved in revolutionary or resistance activities. The heroine of 'Moving on',¹ Sanghua 桑华, has been intimately involved with revolutionary workers but abandons them in exchange for a comfortable existence married to a wealthy capitalist. Mr. Hua Wei is engaged in all kinds of resistance activities but he is capable only of empty rhetoric and not decisive action. In a large number of his short stories about the educated petit-bourgeoisie Zhang captures them teetering on the brink of decisive action.

'Lackadaisical Love Story': a satirical farce or a farcical satire?

The hero and heroine of 'Lackadaisical Love Story' 稀松的恋爱故事² like Pig-gut in the previous story are also members of the leisured petit-bourgeoisie. The story describes the wooing of Juliet 朱列, a student of art and music at university, by Romeo 罗缪 a 'poet'. This story is probably the finest, most skilfully worked story, combining humour and satire, that Zhang wrote during the period 1929 to 1932.

As the story opens the reader is immediately conscious of a posturing, insistent first-person narrator, but almost at once a second narrator chimes in with a comment about the first narrator:

1 In Yixing 《忆行》, Shanghai: Liangyou Publishing Company, (24. 10. 1934).

2 In collection Xiao Bide 《小彼得》, Shanghai: Hufeng Book Company, (25. 12. 1931).

"I have to announce in advance" said the story teller rubbing his hands. "This story isn't interesting, there are no twists, and there are no four-sided loves or five hundred and sixty-seven sided loves."

He stopped a moment, and he rubbed his hands a second time.

The story-teller goes on to introduce Juliet and Romeo to his listeners before being interrupted by this question:

"Why do you endlessly recite their curricula vitae?"

"Recite their curricula vitae? I feel very sad: I merely thought it was Turgenev's method."

For a third time he again rubbed his hands: the story starts here.

("声明在先,"说故事的人搓搓手说。
"这故事不动听,没什么曲折,也没四
边形恋爱或五百六十七边形恋爱。"
停停,他第二次搓手。....

"干么尽背履历?"

"背履历么?悲哀得很:我还以为是
吐隔孽夫的手法哩。"

第三次还是搓搓手:故事开始。)

Zhang could have told this story directly using only the first-person narrator, but instead he chose to use a third-person narrative method to commentate on the first-person narrator. This third person narrator makes only one brief appearance in this story and that is in the first introductory section described above. Immediately after the third-person narrator comments that 'the story begins here' the text is punctuated by three asterisks across the page. When the story resumes, the inverted commas that marked off the words of the story-teller in the section above have been dropped and the third-person commentating narrator has disappeared:

The start of this story of mine is the time when they were already friends.

Romeo often went to look for her. Not a day would go by without:

"San wazi, has my collar been pressed?"

Once the story has begun any narrative commentary is made by the first-person narrator.

What then are the purpose and effect of that first introductory section? Short as the introduction is, it manages to communicate a scene to the reader: there is a story-teller who rubs his hands in the pauses in his story; there is someone else whose identity is not revealed who asks the question "Why do you endlessly recite their curricula vitae?"; and finally there is the author/narrator who uses a third-person narrative method to commentate on the actions of the story-teller (说故事的人) and may perhaps be the person who asks the question "Why do you endlessly recite their curricula vitae?" Thus the reader has an impression of a story-teller telling his story to one or more person with one unidentified listener who interrupts the story-teller to ask a question. This interruption serves the useful purpose of cocking a snook at the Russian writer Turgenev¹ for first telling the life histories of the characters in his story before getting down to the story proper. Thus this brief introduction to the story has the double effect of introducing the story-teller and his audience to the reader whilst the satirical swipe at Turgenev has the effect of making fun of all fiction and its many methods.

As the story unfolds it becomes clear that the first-person narrator is in fact Romeo's friend Lao Bai 老白; remarks addressed to the narrator in the course of the narrative refer to him as Lao Bai. Lao Bai divides the story of Romeo and Juliet's love affair into sections, recounting examples of

¹ The transliteration of his name as 'Spitting and Burping Evil Man' 吐隔孽夫 calls to mind Zhang's delightful habit of supplying his characters with names that are outrageous puns; cf. 'Mr. Dog's Fart' 方构丕先生 in the story 'Falling Star'. The usual transliteration of Turgenev's name is 屠格涅夫.

the various aspects of their courting. To do this, the narrator craves the indulgence of his listeners (or readers) to make use of subheadings: "Excuse me, let me install a few subheadings." (对不起,让我装上些小题目。) These subheadings mark off various characteristic incidents in the courtship of Juliet by Romeo using such titles as 'The Park, Chocolate' (公园,猪股癞糖), 'Sweet Wine' (甜酒), 'A Few Things about Love minus "Spirituality"' (恋爱减“灵”的一些事). Each incident is carefully chosen to make Juliet and Romeo's imitation of Western courtship appear empty and ridiculous. In the section entitled 'Sweet Wine', "this pair of heroes" as the narrator refers to them, go to a restaurant and eat Western-style food like ox-tail soup, drink sweet red wine, and engage in pretentious conversation. Their strenuous efforts at sophistication are skilfully deflated when the narrator informs the reader that Juliet flushed after mistakenly putting mustard in her soup instead of pepper. Romeo composes an impromptu poem to commemorate their visit to the restaurant which he presents to Juliet. Although Juliet finds the poem incomprehensible, she is nonetheless very pleased. The satirical techniques used in this story are mainly exaggeration and deflation. The most cutting use of exaggeration occurs towards the end of the story when the narrator tots up the cost of the two month courtship of Juliet by Romeo:

Chocolate - 134 boxes.

Sweet wine - two cases, three bottles.

Walks in the park - two times a week.

Seeing films - four times a week.

Picnic - 66 times.

Poems expressing one's feelings - 69 poems.

Going to restaurants - more than 200 times (For a more accurate count consult their diaries).

Total money consumed - more than 1500 dollars.

Total time spent - 12,384 hours.

In the final section of the story, entitled 'Endpiece' (煞尾), the narrator writes himself into the story. The narrator and Betty, another friend, are invited to a meal at

Romeo and Juliet's house intended to commemorate the anniversary of the day they started living together. Since the start of their cohabitation, Romeo and Juliet have abandoned their previous lifestyle, and the endless round of walks in the park, visits to cinemas and restaurants has been replaced by a preoccupation with bourgeois concerns like the buying of furniture and other items for their home.

The story ends on a note of discomfiture for Romeo. Over dinner, the narrator's companion Betty comments:

"I fear I shall never find a mate."

"Why?" asks Romeo.

"I'm really not at all like you with so many shekels and so much spare time."

Romeo smiled, took a breath as though about to say something, but did not say anything.

This ending as with the ending to many of Zhang's stories is enigmatic and open to interpretation. Is Romeo embarrassed by Betty's remark? Or is his smile merely the indulgent, smug smile of a rich young man?

This story is noteworthy not only for its masterly and distinctive narrative method but also for its scope and compression. In a few brief pages Zhang manages to pillory the contemporary romantic petit-bourgeoisie by fixing attention on their vanities and pretensions. These vanities and pretensions are chronicled in quick succession and no extraneous material is allowed to blunt the edge of Zhang's finely sharpened satirical sword. The material and the narrative method fit together perfectly. The rather bumptious, ebullient first-person narrator in firm control of his material must one imagines owe something to the tradition of story-telling that existed from Song times (at least) in China. Lao Bai is a hybrid of more elements than the narrators to be found in the works of Maupassant, Turgenev, Chekhov and other European masters of the modern short story. There is something peculiarly Chinese about the narrative method of this story and it probably lies in the wit and humour of the narration, the mock serious tone of the narrator, and the use of special effects such as the installation of sub-headings.

Zhang's earliest work for children: 'Big Lin and Little Lin'.

With Zhang's next story 'Big Lin and Little Lin'¹ his development as a writer of fiction takes a new and unexpected turn. This work is a fantasy about children and directed at children. Though the earlier story 'After moving House' has characters who are children, the subject matter is adult and the readership of that story was clearly meant to be adult. Why Zhang should suddenly have decided to try his hand at children's fiction has not been satisfactorily explained. The only earlier work remotely similar to 'Big Lin and Little Lin' is 'A Diary of Ghostland'. Both stories are set in strange, fantastic worlds and use a similar didactic style.

'Big Lin and Little Lin' is written in language that is easily understood.² No vocabulary that is beyond the competence of an

1 Beidou 2:1 (20. 1. 1932); 2:3, 4 (20.7. 1932).

2 The work reappeared after liberation in a revised edition, (Beijing: Zhongguo shaonian ertong Publishing House, 1956.) The story remains essentially unchanged; minor revisions have been made to accommodate changes in language. The 1932 edition, for example, uses the word 'mogui' 魔鬼; in the 1956 revised version 'mogui' has been replaced by 'guaiwu' 怪物. More interestingly, some critical remarks made by the narrator in the 1932 edition are excised in the revised version. An example of this is the description of Miss Eyu 鳐鱼. In the 1956 version she is described thus: "The manager of the shop was called Miss Eyu. She had a pair of small eyes and a large mouth. Her skin was black and rough and hard; her hair was just like steel pins. This Miss Eyu always thought herself very beautiful On her feet she wore very expensive silk stockings and dancing shoes, but her legs were very short." In the 1932 edition there are gratuitous critical remarks made by the narrator: "The manager of the shop was called Miss Eyu; this young lady really was ugly, with a pair of small eyes, a large mouth that once open could swallow down a train without any trouble. Her skin was black and rough and hard, and her hair was just like steel pins. This Miss Eyu always thought herself very beautiful On her feet she wore very expensive silk stockings and dancing shoes, but her legs were very short, and really ugly." While the reasons for most of the revisions are easily understandable, some of the more colourful passages in the work, for instance, the description of Little Lin's murder of his tyrannical boss Sisige 四四格 have been simplified and compressed in the revised version. Sisige's demise is described in a single line: 'The steel ball was merely thrown a thousand feet into the air before it fell back down, and luckily landed right on Sisige.' In the 1932 edition, the ball is thrown so high and so hard by Little Lin that it disappears for five days, finally falling down and scoring a
(Footnote continues on following page.)

average city-dwelling nine-year-old is used in the story. Other aspects of the story calculated to captivate the interest of young readers are the strange, larger than life characters like Mogui 魔鬼 (Guaiwu 怪物 in the 1956 version) with his incredibly long arms and the strength to push a train from the capital to the coast and on into the sea. Other characters like Eyu 鳄鱼, the manageress of a shop, and Pipi 皮皮, its owner, are animals who talk and behave like humans; Eyu is a crocodile and Pipi a dog. In the 1932 edition in the magazine Beidou the size of print is varied to break up the monotony of the text. These printing irregularities also survive in the post-liberation editions. The 1956 revised version and subsequent reprints are beautifully illustrated with black and white drawings by Hua Junwu 华君武 of characters and situations described in the text. Another technique that helps to break up the monotony of the text and which was first used by Zhang in 'A Diary of Ghostland' is the printing of letters, signs and notices in facsimile representations within a rectangular black line.

The underlying structure of the story is both clear and relatively simple as befits its didactic style and intended readership. The two brothers Big Lin and Little Lin orphaned at a young age are forced to fend for themselves. Happening upon Mogui (Guaiwu), the brothers run away and the monster gives chase bent on eating the two young boys. To foil Mogui the boys split up and run in opposite directions. At this point the narrative divides and the narrator first reveals what befalls Little Lin. After successfully overcoming one misfortune after another, Little Lin finally escapes from the factory of the cruel Sisige and runs away, finding sanctuary at the house of a good man, Zhongmai bobo 中麦伯伯. At this point the narrator picks up the story thread at the

(Continuation of footnote 2 from preceding page.)

direct hit on Sisige on the sixth day. Qiaoqiao 乔乔 generally thought to be the most intelligent of Sisige's child workers, is questioned by the other workers about the disappearance and sudden reappearance of the steel ball. Qiaoqiao gives a pseudo-scientific explanation for the phenomenon, claiming that Little Lin threw the steel ball so hard that it went round the earth once before returning to its starting out point six days later. Possibly Zhang felt that this explanation was not sufficiently scientific to satisfy his young readers in 1956 and excluded it from the revised version as a consequence.

moment when Little Lin and Big Lin parted and ran in opposite directions. The transition is effected thus:

Every night Little Lin dreams of Big Lin but as soon as he wakes he disappears.

"My brother, where are you?"

Yes, really, where in fact is Big Lin? — The people who are listening to the story would all like to know.

And Big Lin? At this time Big Lin is in his own home. Big Lin is just at this moment having a meal in his own home. When Big Lin eats a meal it is a great nuisance. Standing beside Big Lin are 200 people

Having said this much you are sure to ask:

"Why don't you start from the beginning? How could Big Lin have run to this place? How can Big Lin have his own house? That day when the monster wanted to eat Big Lin and Little Lin, Big Lin and Little Lin split up and ran, and then we didn't see Big Lin anymore. Start from there please."

Yes, I'll start from there then.

This dramatised exchange between the author/narrator and the imagined reader not only helps to smooth over the hiatus in linking what befalls Little Lin to what befell Big Lin but also reminds the reader of what happened right at the beginning of the story. The author/narrator also has a good opportunity to establish a direct relationship with the reader, a relationship which becomes important at the end of the story when the author/narrator comes to life as one of the participants in the story.

Big Lin becomes the adopted son of an heirless millionaire. He lives in luxury and idleness. By coincidence he comes to be travelling on a train that would have been driven by his brother had Little Lin not gone on strike. The two brothers are almost brought together by force of circumstance, but this selfsame force once more drives them apart. The monster which had earlier chased the Lin brothers in the hope of eating them pushes the train on which Big Lin is travelling into the sea. Continuing to follow Big Lin's activities, the narrator describes how he is washed up on an island inhabited only by ants and bees.

Feeling out of place on this island he leaps at the chance of being transported to Millionaire's Island 富翁島. Millionaire's Island turns out to be a Fool's Paradise consisting entirely of gold bars, silver ingots and precious stones. Big Lin and his fellow men of wealth also marooned on the island all eventually die of starvation.

Finally in Chapter 19, the last chapter of the book, the author/narrator once more returns to the subject of Little Lin:

And what about Qiaoqiao [Little Lin's girlfriend] and Little Lin? Where are they now?

Qiaoqiao and Little Lin still work on the engine. One day, on their rest day, there was a children's story-writer who went to interview them. All the railway workers said:

"They are at the library."

As soon as the children's storywriter went into the library, sure enough he found Qiaoqiao and Little Lin reading children's stories there. The children's storywriter called out:

"Qiaoqiao, Little Lin, how are you?"

A Librarian quickly wagged his finger at him. The children's storywriter stuck his tongue out and softly asked Qiaoqiao and Little Lin:

"And what about the king? How was the king?"

Little Lin also spoke softly:

"Ha , you are merely concerned about the king!

In the past there was a king"

The children's storywriter blushed and said:

"Who says I am only concerned about 'in the past there was a king'! I'm really concerned about you two. Honestly, what happened to you that day after you refused to drive Jiji's [Big Lin's assumed name] train, and drove off in the engine?"

"That really is another story, you could simply write a book about it," said Qiaoqiao, glancing at Little Lin.

The children's storywriter does not succeed in extracting the

missing part of his story from Qiaoqiao and Little Lin, and is forced to seek out an elderly railway worker who completes the story.

'Big Lin and Little Lin' is most interesting for its political significance. Zhang seemingly unfettered by the exacting requirements of realistic, adult fiction was able to give vent to his political feelings. Whereas in the earlier stories like 'Little Peter' and 'San taiye and Guisheng' the activities of oppressed workers and peasants either fail to reach their mark or are cruelly suppressed, 'Big Lin and Little Lin' portrays workers who rise against their employer and actually kill him. This is both more stirring and more serious than the slaughter of the factory owner's dog in 'Little Peter'. Admittedly Little Lin makes use of a steel ball with magic properties, but we should not allow this to detract from the spontaneity and determination of the revolt against the bully Sisige. It is also worth noting that the authority behind the plan to dispose of Sisige is Little Lin's girlfriend Qiaoqiao. The murder of Sisige is not the only example of solidarity amongst workers in the story. In the final chapter when the elderly railway worker is putting the finishing touches to the story, he reveals that the prince of the realm blamed the train disaster in which the old king and his consort were drowned and Big Lin disappeared on Little Lin and Qiaoqiao because they refused to drive the engine. They are taken to court where they are found guilty. At this point in his story the elderly railway worker narrator becomes angry and says:

"But can we let them harm our own people.
Of course we can't! None of us railway workers will stand for it. Qiaoqiao and Little Lin must be set free or else!"

And it was not only all the workers on the railway, but also other workers who rose up, and asked the king to immediately release the railway workers who were in custody

Some teachers, and also some writers and artists, and some scientists all stood up:

"Release Qiaoqiao and Little Lin and all the other railway workers being held!"

Frightened by the proletariat, the new king and his minions acceded to their demands.

The publication of 'Big Lin and Little Lin' in book form was not surprisingly prohibited by Nationalist censors. As a result of this, the work was published under several different titles by several different publishing houses in an effort to circumvent the ban.¹ This ban can thus be seen as a measure of the story's success and an indication of the precise identity of Zhang's satirical target.

Why Zhang should suddenly have turned his hand to writing a work of children's fiction at this moment in his literary career can best be explained by remembering that it follows closely upon 'A Diary of Ghostland' and thus allows Zhang to continue to exercise his imagination unconstrained by reality. It also allows further indulgence of his inclination towards facetiousness and playfulness, especially in projecting the persona of the author. On an allegorical level, it serves political ends.

'Big Lin and Little Lin' is important not only for its place in Zhang Tianyi's literary development but also for its place in the historical development of indigenous works of fiction written for children after the use of modern vernacular in fiction became widespread in the 1920s. Before Zhang's 'Big Lin and Little Lin', the only work of children's fiction of any note was Ye Shengtao's 叶圣陶 collection of stories Daocao ren 《稻草人》² which consisted of 23 short stories. Following the publication of this collection, there was a dearth of good quality fiction for children. There were translations of foreign children's stories appearing during this time but

1 See Jin Jiang, 'Tan Zhang Tianyi de tonghua' 谈张天翼的童话 in Ertong wenxue zuojia zuopin lun 《儿童文学作家作品论》, Beijing: Zhongguo shaonian ertong Publishing House, (4. 1981) 45.

2 Shanghai: Commercial Press (11. 1923).

hardly any original native works. Zhang's 'Big Lin and Little Lin' can be regarded as one of the earliest attempts to write an extensive original work of fiction in the modern vernacular for Chinese children.

'Predestination and Prognostication': a study in character.

Zhang's next work 'Predestination and Prognostication' 宿命论与算命论¹ once more focused satirical interest on the adult world and that pathetic class of person struggling to clamber up the lower rungs of the ladder of success. The story which is told using a third-person narrative method describes a 24 year-old agent employed on special assignments (特务员) in a government unit. His name is Shu Keji 舒可济 and he is not an endearing character. He is determined to advance his own interests at all costs and the story serves to analyse the extents to which he is willing to go in order to achieve his ends.

The story is structured in a way similar to that used in 'The Leather Belt', being divided into five numbered sections which once again mark intervals in the reported action.

In the opening section Comrade Shu 舒同志 is seen interacting with his colleagues over lunch at a restaurant. None of his colleagues seem to take him seriously and some of them are deliberately rude to him. Amongst the luncheon party guests is one who claims to tell fortunes. Shu is keen to have his fortune told and takes comfort from the news that his fate will improve. In the course of the luncheon conversation the reader learns that Shu used to be a Communist Party member but that he changed his allegiance.

Wandering about the streets after lunch Shu's sexual frustration wells up as he sees couples walking along in the spring sunshine. We learn from the narrator that in an effort to relieve his despondency "he hopes that all the couples walking along are brothers and sisters".² Believing that his

1 Xiandai 1:1 (5. 1932).

2 This scene is similar to a passage in One Year that describes Li Yitai.

lack of success in the world and with women can be attributed to his paucity of funds (we have already been told that he earns between 30 and 40 dollars a month) he resolves to work hard.

As Shu is walking along he notices a woman from the office library, Comrade Ma 麻同志 walking along with one of his old school-friends whom he thought had been killed by firing-squad in Beijing.

The second section takes place the following day. Shu questions Comrade Ma about her companion of the previous day. His old school-friend has retained his surname but changed his 'mingzi' 名子. He now works as a teacher at a secondary school. Shu seeks him out and they discuss their circumstances, past and present.

Shu returns to his flea-pit abode and continues to dwell on his sexual frustrations and fantasies. Laughably he thinks that all he needs to make life perfect is an iron, a raincoat and a woman. He dreams about succeeding with Comrade Ma; in his dream she is sitting on his bed and he has gained promotion.

Later in the third section, Shu arrives at the office and impatiently asks to see his superior Secretary Yang 杨秘书. The reader is not party to the conversation between Shu and Secretary Yang and when the fourth section opens discussions are already in progress; Secretary Yang orders Shu and two other agents to go and pick up a suspected Communist agent, Shu's old school-friend. Shu tries unsuccessfully to avoid taking part in the mission.

Suffering remorse and sleeplessness as a result of his action, Shu tries to quieten his conscience by attributing what he has done to fate. The story ends with Shu weeping pathetically into his smelly quilt and lamenting the fate that has linked him with his old school-friend.

Shu's lot seems no better at the end of the story than it was at the beginning, and the quality of his life would seem

to be considerably worse by the end. His desire to better himself has led him to sell out an old friend and comrade and all that he has gained in exchange is remorse of conscience and sleepless nights.

As in 'From Emptiness to Fullness' and 'After moving House' revolutionary activities are not described directly, the focus of interest in these stories being at one remove from the revolutionaries themselves. A sign that 'Predestination and Prognostication' was not one of Zhang's more successful works is the fact that it appeared in only one of Zhang's short story collections, Mifeng¹ and was not subsequently republished. Hu Feng² singled out 'Predestination and Prognostication' for special comment, suggesting that it exhibits Zhang's failing of 'unrealistic exaggeration' (不真实的夸张):

Because the writer enthusiastically portrays an attitude in his characters in order to strengthen the effect at which he is aiming, he sometimes exaggerates their feelings in one particular direction. 'Predestination and Prognostication' produced the greatest dissatisfaction amongst his readers for this reason.

(因为作者只是热心地在他的人物里面表现一个观念,为了加强他所要的效果,有时候就把他们的心理单纯地向一个方向夸张了。最被读者不满的《宿命论与算命论》,那缺陷就是从这里产生出来的。)

Hu Feng's criticism does have some foundation; Zhang has a tendency, especially in his fantastical works to make use of 'unrealistic exaggeration', but why Hu Feng should have felt that this failing was particularly noticeable in the story 'Predestination and Prognostication' is not clear. Having made the above assertion, Hu Feng proceeds to quote extensively from 'Predestination and Prognostication' to illustrate his point.

1 《蜜蜂》, Shanghai: Xiandai Book Company, (15. 5. 1933).

2 See 'Lun Zhang Tianyi' 论张天翼, in Wenyi bitan 《文艺笔谈》, Shanghai (1936) 59-63.

The passage that he quotes is a passage describing Shu's visit to his old school-friend when he is in custody. Shu makes uncomfortable efforts to apologise for what he has done and manufactures excuses with difficulty. Zhang manages rather well to capture Shu's mounting discomfiture and his old school-friend's stonewall refusal to put Shu at his ease; thus this passage is not a good illustration of the point that Hu Feng wishes to make.

'Predestination and Prognostication' succeeds as a portrait of a pathetic and despicable person and it brings Zhang a little closer to the direct description of the world of Communist revolutionaries at work. Zhang's last few works towards the end of 1932 all deal in one way or another with revolution and revolutionaries and are clear signals of the increased politicisation of his writing.

Zhang's brand of patriotic fiction: 'The Last Train'.

The next story 'The Last Train' 最后列车¹ has a contemporary historical background. On 18 September, 1931, the Japanese army stationed in Manchuria suddenly attacked Shenyang, simultaneously going on the offensive in Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces. Shenyang fell the following day and by January 1932 the whole of North-eastern China was under Japanese control. The Japanese offensive engendered a wave of patriotic works and Zhang's story was one amongst them. 'The Last Train' describes a group of Chinese soldiers and their officers caught in the path of the Japanese advance. They are waiting at a small railway station not far from Shenyang for a train to come and carry them to safety. A message comes to say that a large part of the train has been captured by the Japanese. Later a message comes to say that the last remaining carriage has fallen into Japanese hands; no train will come to rescue them. At this point the commanding officer orders his men to assemble and gives the order for them to retreat. The men refuse to do this. The platoon commander 团长 then shoots the soldier who has dared to voice the feelings of his comrades. A fight breaks out and the soldiers

¹ Wenxue yuebao 1:2 (10. 7. 1932).

stifle their officers and decide to act on their own initiative. They lay a huge log across the railway track and take up positions to await the arrival of the Japanese. The story ends thus:

"Hell, they've arrived!"

.... Pow! Pow, pow, pow! Pow! Jia, jia,
jia, jia, jia, jia.

And then: the beginning!

("妈 糕 操 , 来 啦 !")

.... 拍! 拍拍拍! 拍! 夏夏夏夏夏夏
于是 : 开始!)

This final cryptic remark from the author/narrator in the last line of the story seems to be another example of Zhang's fondness for equivocal endings to his stories. A simple and a complex explanation of this last line are both equally feasible. The simple explanation is that the firing of guns marked the beginning of the conflict. The complex explanation is that 'the beginning' implies that a new chapter has opened for the soldiers now that they have taken power into their own hands and overthrown their officers. Zhang almost puts his admiration for the revolutionary action of the soldiers into words but at the very last moment he remembers that he is first and foremost a writer of stories and that it is not the storywriter's place to make direct qualitative judgements on the events described in a story.

Much as Zhang as author/narrator might wish to show himself at one with common soldiers that are being described, intellectualised comments on the part of the narrator betray the distance between them. An example of this is the narrator's comment on the following remark made by a soldier:

"The whole lot has been nobbled by the devils!" --
in fact one exclamation mark after this sentence is insufficient, for to describe their tone of voice and the twisting of their faces, the use of 144 exclamation marks would not be excessive.

Like the wounded soldiers in 'The Bread Queue' and the

disgruntled soldiers in 'The Twenty-one', the soldiers in this story act out of a feeling of frustration towards those in authority over them. In 'The Last Train', however, the source of the courage to act comes from feelings of desperation and of being trapped. One of the soldiers puts it like this: "In any case we are bound to die: if we fight we'll die, and if we don't fight we'll still die" No grandiloquent talk of patriotism here; this is the practical voice of realism.

A child as storyteller: 'Bees'.

'Bees' 蜜蜂¹ like 'The Last Train' is about spontaneous rebellion, but this time in a rural setting, amongst peasant farmers. The setting resembles that which is the background to 'San taiye and Guisheng' but the narrative technique is novel. The story is divided into five sections and each section represents a letter written by an eleven-year-old boy to his elder sister. 'After moving House', it is true, also deals with children and revolutionaries, but in 'Bees' a spontaneous expression of peasant discontent is actually seen through the eyes and recounted through the letters of a not always fully comprehending child. What might easily have been an unmitigated failure turns out to be a curious success, mainly because of Zhang's skill at capturing the modes of expression of young children and his understanding of their interests and pastimes. Another reason why the story succeeds is that the contrast between the seriousness of the events being described and the banal incomprehension of the child narrator produces a poignant counterpoint.

The bare bones of the story related by the child are as follows: the father of a classmate has a hive of Italian bees which have been destroying the crops of the other villagers. (The whole story may be a symbolic scaling down of the adult world where Italian bees would stand for foreign aggressors attacking the land of China, a particularly pertinent theme in the light of Japanese military operations in China at this time, 1931-1932). At the end of their tether, the villagers decide to air their grievance before the county magistrate 县长 .

¹ Xiandai 1:3 (7. 1932).

The school-children go along too. The magistrate sends a minion to tell the villagers he is too busy to see them. Not satisfied by this, the villagers step up their demands to see the magistrate. He eventually agrees to meet representatives. The magistrate tells them that he will announce his decision the following day. Still not satisfied the villagers threaten to march in and demand an immediate decision. Angered by the persistence of the villagers the magistrate appears at his gate just as the villagers are confronting the armed guards. The magistrate takes the side of the owner of the bees and orders the guards to arrest the ringleaders who include the narrator's father and elder brother. A *mêlée* ensues and the villagers are driven away by the guards. The villagers hurry to the house of the owner of the bees; there they find guards and a locked gate. When they break down the gate some of their number are seized by the guards and the others are driven off. The narrator, another school-child and one teacher hide in a glade before returning to school. The last letter ends poignantly:

Buzz buzz, buzz buzz, the bees are calling once again.

Dad and big brother have disappeared A lot of people have disappeared

I want to go and play, so I won't write any more.
Bye-bye.

The effect of the story is largely achieved by understatement. The stirring events are told against a background of trivial childish conversations and banal activities. Each visit to the toilet whilst writing his letter is faithfully recorded. The letters are full of mistakes, mostly characters with the same sound substituted for the correct character (鲜长 for 县长 ; and 欺五 for 欺侮 for instance). These mistakes are not only amusing but also make the reader wonder about the extent of the narrator's comprehension of what he hears and sees around him, which is of course the author's intention for he wishes to convince the reader that the letters which make up the story are written by a child and not an adult.

Zhang's least successful novel: The Pulse of the Age.

The Pulse of the Age 《时代的跳动》 (alternatively titled Cogwheel 《齿轮》)¹ a novel of about 80,000 characters in length, deals with the student movement that was stimulated by the Japanese military action in the North East (九一八事变). The novel is divided into two parts, the first being set in Nanjing, the second in Shanghai. The characters are almost all of the educated classes and include functionaries, students and writers who seem to be engaged in revolutionary activities. Descriptions are often so vague as to make the precise social standing of the characters uncertain. The characters seem to inhabit their own world isolated from the rest of society, associating only with like-minded friends (同道的朋友), i.e. the other characters in the book.

This novel breaks unhappily into two parts. When the action moves to Shanghai after the bulk of the novel has described characters in Nanjing there is an unfortunate hiatus. These new Shanghai characters are, we are told, friends of the Nanjing characters and are supposedly actively engaged in revolutionary work rather than simply sharing common viewpoints like the Nanjing characters. A similar hiatus occurs at the very end of One Year when the three centres of reader interest, the characters, Bai Muyi, Li Yitai and Liang Mei xuan are all dead, and the action suddenly switches to Shanghai where Bai Muyi's cousin, Bai Jun, a most unlikely revolutionary, is apparently engaged in education work for the Communist Party. In both these novels there is a lack of structure and the author/narrator is constantly allowing himself to be distracted by sub-plots and minor themes that momentarily capture his interest, rather than concentrating on the main plot of the novel. The final sections set in Shanghai in both One Year and The Pulse of the Age give the reader the impression that they have been tacked on to the foregoing story as an afterthought, a belated attempt to justify and make politically acceptable what has gone before. The final section of The Pulse of the Age describes the Japanese attack on Shanghai launched on the night of 28 January, 1932 (and known as 一二八事变 in consequence).

¹ Shanghai: Hufeng Bookshop (30. 9. 1932).

According to a review of The Pulse of the Age by Mao Dun using the pseudonym Dongfang weiming 东方未明, the book's failing is that 'it does not attempt to explain the "age"' (没有企图说明「时代」).¹ Sima Changfeng 司马长风 in his recent history of Modern Chinese literature² suggests that The Pulse of the Age was Zhang's least successful work and one that produced considerable adverse criticism.

The increased politicisation and historicity of Zhang's fiction (1931-32).

Zhang's next work 'Battalion Commander "Monk"' 和尚大队长,³ has as its time span the period just after the Japanese attack on Shanghai on 28 January, 1932. Characters in the story speak of the 19th Route Army which led the resistance against the Japanese. There is also mention of strikes being organised in Japanese factories, another aspect of resistance work at that time. Near the end of the story comes the news that 'on the front line the fighting has stopped'; historically hostilities ceased on 3 March 1932. This close adherence to a contemporary historical base can be noticed first in the story 'Bad Dream' which has as its background the events immediately following 4 May, 1919. 'The Last Train' is set in the period following the Japanese attack on Shenyang on 18 September, 1931. The Pulse of the Age spans the historical period from just after 18 September 1931 until just after 28 January 1932.

There can be no doubt that these were stirring times in China and that the fomenting of anti-Japanese feeling amongst the Chinese at this time was the rallying call of leftist activists. Many writers of the League of Left-wing Writers were prompted to write historically; two other works which fall under the heading 'Post-September 18 anti-Japanese literature' reviewed together with Zhang's The Pulse of the Age by Mao Dun, in the magazine Wenxue were Lin Qing's 林菁 Yiyongjun 《义勇军》 and Li Huiying's 李辉英 Wanbaoshan 《万宝山》. The Heavyweights of the League of Left-

1 See Wenxue 1:2 (8. 1933) 340-343.

2 Zhongguo xin wenxue shi Vol. 2 《中国新文学史》中卷, Hong Kong (3. 1976) 81.

3 Wenxue yuebao 1:4 (15. 11. 1932).

wing Writers were by 1932 beginning to write decidedly committed works; Ding Ling's Water 《水》 and Mao Dun's San ren xing 《三人行》 appeared in 1931; Mao Dun's Spring Silkworms 《春蚕》 and Midnight 《子夜》, Ba Jin's New Life 《新生》, and Ding Ling's Mother 《母亲》 all appeared in 1932. The surge in writings of a politically committed nature that appeared in the early 1930s raises the question of the degree to which the writers of these works were organised. The League was not established until March 1930 in Shanghai, but already within a year of its inception there is a noticeably concerted effort amongst members of the League to write works with a more proletarian flavour (i.e. works dealing with workers and peasants) as well as works with political and historical bases.

Looking back over the literature of the previous year, Qian Xingcun 钱杏邨 (better known as A Ying 阿英) in his article 'A review of China's literary scene in 1931' 一九三一年中国文坛的回顾¹ picked out as the material most worthy of treatment by writers, the flooding of the Changjiang 长江 which had wreaked havoc in central China early in 1931. Ding Ling's Water and Tian Han's five act play 'Flood' 《洪水》 receive praise for their treatment of this subject. The next most important material according to Qian was anti-imperialist and above all anti-Japanese material. The plays 'Luan zhong' 《乱钟》 and 'Sao she' 《扫射》 are praised for their exemplary spirit of encouragement to the Chinese people; these two works were by Tian Han. Having pointed out the most politically sound works of 1931 in his view Qian goes on to say:

.... apart from the works that captured these subjects there were also some other works worthy of note, in

[穆时英] and Shi Zhecun [施蛰存]²

1 Beidou 2:1 (20 1. 1932) 1-24.

2 ibid. p.16.

The implication of these remarks by Qian Xingcun in Beidou, the influential organ of the League of Left-wing Writers, is that by the end of 1931, Zhang was from a political standpoint a writer of promise, but that as yet in his writings he had not come completely into line with the generally accepted aims and principles of the league.

During the course of 1932, however, Zhang came increasingly to produce the kind of works that were expected of him. One can see from his articles on literary theory published in Beidou in January and July 1932 that Zhang, on an intellectual level at least, had come to accept the need to write with a definite political aim in mind: the education of the masses.¹

Zhang was one of many prominent contemporary writers who offered their thoughts on the topic: 'The reason why creative writing is in the doldrums and the solution' 创作不振之原因及其出路.² Analysing the current literary scene, Zhang had this to say:

Most if not all writers are petit-bourgeois intellectuals. Upon becoming aware of the immensity of the strength of the age, and awakening to the fact that the class of which they themselves are members is about to reach the end of the road, they are planning to force literary works away from the realm of individualism and transfer them to the world of the group. On the one hand, the old methods of describing the feelings of the individual

1 Near the end of Zhang's first work to be published the following year, One Year, one of the characters, Bai Jun, describes his current activities: "My life is very hard, but this kind of thing is very meaningful. We are at present using new teachings to teach the class of farmers' children. We are also teaching the adults, telling them a lot of true things, to encourage them to do true things." "True things?" "Yes, true things. For instance the things we often hear mentioned like imperialism, tyrannical gentry, so we tell them what these things are, tell them that because of these things they suffer starvation" By the time the 4th edition of One Year appeared on 20 April 1936 it had been shorn of the above passage together with the rest of the final 5-page chapter entitled 'News' (消息) and the author's postscript (后记).

2 This series of articles appeared in Beidou 2:1 (20. 1. 1932) pp. 145-168.

and things close to hand have been abandoned - or at least partially abandoned - but on the other hand, the new consciousness has not been grasped, and as a result literary creativity has sunk into a kind of extreme destitution.

In order to rescue us from this situation, we must have a new training.

The composition of literary works proceeds from two fundamental constituents: ideology, and experience of life.

If one has correct ideology, then one will have a correct viewpoint - and go on from there to organise one's material, so for this reason theoretical guidelines are essential. We certainly must grasp the scientific dialectic correctly and firmly so that our literary works will develop; at the same time what is even more necessary is to put in some hard work at overcoming the lingering remnants of our old consciousness. (There are quite a few people who have not done this, and I am one of them. There are also some new works, which still have a tendency to be strongly tainted with decadence and romance, or have a tendency towards hero-worship; this is because they have not completely flushed out the residue of the old consciousness before beginning the [literary] fermentation process.)

But it is [not] only in respect to theory that the training is insufficient. We still need to go and obtain new experience of life: that is to say, we not only need to grasp the consciousness of one type amongst the new groups, but what is even more necessary is to go and live in the world of that group, and gain first-hand experience. Every one of our new writers should leave his window and writing-desk, and go into the society where the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers are to be found. Since the stimulation from society experienced by intellectuals from petit-bourgeois backgrounds is neither direct nor

particularly acute, if they just shut themselves up in a room and spend all their time writing, always buried in empty thoughts or feeling poverty-stricken, vainly relying on their imagination, no matter how magnificent their genius they will still be unable to produce forceful works, and as for whether they have genius or not, over this too hangs a questionmark.

As for old works of literature, we certainly must not abandon them, just the opposite: we must be open to everything. This is certainly not to say we must imitate, rather that we simply ought to use them as nourishment. Babies who do not drink their mother's milk will not grow bigger. We need to be open to the old techniques, and turn them to our own purposes, by means of the scientific dialectic.

If we have a new consciousness, a new way of life, then the works that we write, will naturally take new forms

'Battalion Commander "Monk": a story of urban subterfuge.

'Battalion Commander "Monk"' ¹ provides a cynical insight into urban subterfuge following the Japanese advance on Shanghai. The eponymous hero is in charge of a group of collaborators, who are helping their Japanese masters to frame strike leaders in Japanese-run factories by planting evidence on them. In one dramatic incident one of Monk's accomplices is caught in the act of planting evidence and is summarily shot along with the two factory workers he has been trying to incriminate. When the Japanese are stopped short of victory, the gang is left to fend for itself. Monk's second-in-command, Wen taishi 闻太师, is arrested and leads the Government soldiers to their hide-out. Monk sees them coming and manages to make his escape. The tone changes abruptly at the end of the story when the narrator calls upon the reader to join him in observing the action: "So, let's have a look at those people." ("那, 我们来瞧那几个人吧。") That we find Battalion Commander Monk and

¹ Wenxue yuebao 1:4 (15. 11. 1932).

Wen taishi riding high again after the ending of hostilities seems to be a bitter comment on the corrupt society reasserting itself. Presumably they have been recruited as Chinese government spies.

The underworld of spies and revolutionaries that has only been described obliquely in earlier stories like 'From Emptiness to Fullness' and 'Predestination and Prognostication' is described directly for the first time in this story. The style used is similar to that to be found in agitational stories like 'The Bread Queue': there are snatches of dialogue with interlinking narrative.

The story is distinctive for its abrupt change of narrative style at its conclusion. The epilogue (尾巴) like the epilogue in One Year has all the signs of having been tacked on as an afterthought.

'Hate': an agitational story that breaks the mould.

Zhang's last work published in 1932 was the story 'Hate' 仇恨.¹ The stories 'The Bread Queue' and 'The Twenty-one' are the precursors of this story about soldiers and civilians, fleeing from fighting, rape and pillage. Unlike its two precursors, 'Hate', as its title hints, is an attempt to universalise the experiences of the characters in the story. This is the most ambitious of Zhang's "agitational" stories and succeeds in showing an understanding of both civilian refugees and the soldiers that brought havoc to their lives.

The story begins with a description of a group of civilian refugees fleeing across the loess of North China. They are making for a settlement called Liujiatun 刘家屯. The precise moment at which the action is meant to be taking place is not revealed to the reader, but was presumably some time in the late 1920s or early 1930s. The imprecision of details such as time and place help to universalise the story. Members of an army (again the identity of the army is not revealed but

1 Xiandai 2:1 (11. 1932).

presumably it is meant to be a warlord army) have raped and pillaged in their village. On their seemingly interminable journey across the loess they come across a young lad who is lying on the ground with ants crawling all over him. He has been stabbed several times. He begs the group of refugees to end his agony. The ants are driven away and they clean his wounds. This incident serves to prompt the refugees to think what they would do if they came across soldiers at this moment:

.... if a battalion were to march before them, no matter whether those soldiers had knives or rifles, they would still rush them and use their hands to strangle them, and use their teeth to bite their flesh.

As the sun begins to set, the refugees rest exhausted in front of a derelict temple. At first only the reader and the narrator are aware that there are three soldiers walking nearby. One is on crutches, one has a swollen face, and the third is very thin. When the soldiers catch sight of the refugees they merely exclaim "Civilians!" (老百姓!) Finally when the refugees notice the soldiers they rush them and knock them down. They encourage one another to beat the soldiers. The soldiers vainly attempt to justify themselves. The refugees only stop beating and cursing the soldiers when they realise that these soldiers were once farmers like themselves. Suddenly their attitude changes completely and they provide the soldiers with water to drink and to bathe their wounds. The soldier on crutches dies shortly afterwards from his gangrenous wounds. Having buried him, the struggling band of refugees sets off once more along the hot dusty road to Liujiatun.

This story is didactic from the point of view that it attempts to teach a moral lesson. Both the refugees and the soldiers have all at one time been tillers of the soil. Force of circumstance alone has led the soldiers to abandon the land; one of the soldiers attempts a justification: "Who enjoys doing this kind of thing! If you had nothing to eat, what would you do? Wouldn't you do this?" Though the story makes it clear that there is no ostensible difference between

the soldiers and the refugees, no attempt is made to pinpoint the root cause of everyone's ills. From this point of view, the story ultimately fails because it simply does not educate the reader. Instead the story is noteworthy for its shockingly brutal realistic descriptions. Not only is there a graphic blow-by-blow account of the refugees beating up the soldiers, but there is also a particularly gruesome description of the maggot-infested knee of the soldier on crutches:

His wound was the size of the mouth of a tea cup. Thousands and thousands of maggots were crawling about in this red hole, and his body was bathed in pus and blood. The scarlet blood and the pale yellow pus were mixed together. As soon as the grey material was drawn back, the fat white maggots as if in fright began to rush about in all directions.

(伤口象茶杯口那麽大小。成千累万的蛆在这红色的洞口里爬着,身上浴着脓血。紫红的血,淡黄的脓,给捣成了一片。灰布刚一解开,这些白胖的蛆虫害怕似的乱窜乱奔起来。)

Conclusion

The above analysis of the fiction written by Zhang between 1929 and 1932 reveals the foundation of Zhang's literary creativity, a foundation upon which his subsequent works build. At the most fundamental level, the works analysed above can be divided into various thematic classes. The largest of these thematic classes is the class that describes characters from educated society (those with a university education in the main) and shows these characters having difficulty adjusting to the society that they find around them. The stories that fall into this category are: 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days', 'Retribution', 'From Emptiness to Fullness', 'The Three Brothers', 'A Man in Search of Stimulation' and 'Pig-gut's Chagrin'. The next largest thematic group is the group described by C. T. Hsia as 'agitational' and which deals with pockets of

disaffected workers, peasants or soldiers. 'Santaiye and Guisheng', 'Last Train' and 'Hate' are all examples of this category of story. Another category is the class of stories that describes events (usually events in the adult world) from the viewpoint of children; examples of this class of story are 'After moving House' and 'Bees'. The category which probably accounts for the greatest number of pages written by Zhang during this period is the category that portrays poorly-educated members of the bourgeoisie trying to better their positions in society in the face of well-nigh impossible odds.¹ The novel One Year is a work that concentrates on the efforts of several bourgeois characters to pull themselves up the slippery ladder of official advancement. Though they occasionally meet with success, this success is transitory and often self-delusory. The short stories 'The Leather Belt', 'Predestination and Prognostication' and to a certain extent 'Battalion Commander "Monk"' also fall into this category. Yet another category is the class of Zhang's fiction that hovers between fantasy and farce. These stories which are more or less realistic include the long work 'A Diary of Ghostland', the children's story 'Big Lin and Little Lin', and the satirical short story 'Lackadaisical Love Story'. The novel The Pulse of the Age does not fit happily into any of the above categories, describing as it does the student movement that came into existence in answer to Japanese aggression in China in 1931 and 1932.

Such an analysis and division into various thematic classes is admittedly arbitrary and obscures the range of Zhang's fiction during the years 1929 to 1932, but does provide us with various categories against which we can compare and contrast Zhang's subsequent writings and assess his development as a writer in the following years.

¹ The large volume of Zhang's writings of this kind can best be accounted for by the type of employment he was engaged in at this time. His many different jobs as office clerk, minor functionary, etc. during the years 1929-1931 must have provided him with much grist for his creative mill.

Another guide to Zhang's development as a writer of fiction is the narrative technique used in his works. We have already observed that Zhang used several different techniques to narrate the stories analysed above. As the nature of his material demanded, he would choose either a first or third-person narrative technique to present his story. This together with the influence of narrative technique on narrative style -- whether the choice of one narrative technique in preference to another dictates the style of the narrative, or whether the narrative style dictates the choice of narrative technique -- will be discussed in detail in a later chapter.

Chapter Four

Zhang's writings (1933-1934)

Introduction

A large proportion of Zhang's corpus of writings was written during the years 1933-1934. In the summer of 1933, finding himself without a job, and living at the time in his sister's house in Nanjing, Zhang resolved to devote all his time to writing.¹ Zhang taught briefly in Hangzhou in the summer of 1934, but with this brief exception, he was engaged full-time on his writing from the summer of 1933 until August 1935, when at the invitation of Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎, he went to teach the history of modern Chinese literature at Jinan University 暨南大学 in Shanghai.²

To live by one's pen alone in 1930s China was no easy task. Payments for manuscripts at this time were limited to 3 dollars per thousand characters in Shanghai, an average of 5 dollars per thousand characters in Beijing. In order to support the humblest of existences, a Shanghai writer would have needed to earn 40 dollars per month, which would have meant writing and selling more than 13,000 characters' worth of manuscript to make ends meet.³ The exigency of earning enough to live must have been in some cases a powerful incentive and in others a powerful disincentive to young men wishing to earn a living by writing fiction. The need to make ends meet must have prompted some writers to write quickly and at length, whilst others were forced to supplement the money they earned from writing by taking on a part-time job.⁴ In either case the quality of writing was likely to suffer; those living by their pen alone were more preoccupied with quantity than quality, whilst those in employment could devote only a small part of their time to writing.

1 Shen et al., 'Zhang Tianyi wenxue huodong nianbiao', 276.

2 Shen, *ibid.*, 276.

3 Wei Jingbo, 海派与京派产生的背景
in Lu Xun feng 16 (20. 6. 1939) 225.

4 Tang Tao for instance worked in the mornings in the Post Office; his writing was done in his spare time. That this is a universal problem can be illustrated by the example of Trollope who rose early each day to write for a few hours before going out to do a day's work.

Zhang's circumstances would appear to have been more favourable than those of many of his fellow-writers. First, during the years 1928 and 1929 after leaving Peking University (Spring 1927) and moving South, Zhang moved frequently in the area around Shanghai and Nanjing and held jobs in quick succession as family tutor, copy-clerk, reporter, newspaper editor and office clerk.¹ This brought Zhang into contact with people of all classes such as business people, factory workers, primary school teachers, ricksha pullers, apprentices, soldiers, playboys, landlords, dockworkers, servants, maids and unemployed persons.² Zhang's experiences and social intercourse during the years 1928 and 1929 provided the raw material for many subsequent stories. Other sources of material were stories told by friends over a meal and some drinks in restaurants.³ The material for stories such as 'The Twenty-one', 'The Road', 'The Leather Belt' probably owes a good deal to stories recounted to Zhang by his friend Jiang Muliang who had served in the army.⁴

Secondly, Zhang was able to live quite frugally in his sister's home in Nanjing, thus avoiding the expense of maintaining himself in a big city like Shanghai.

Thirdly, Zhang's working conditions for at least part of this period were particularly favourable. For a time Zhang and Jiang Muliang worked together in the same office in Nanjing as clerks. Since work was slack they were able to devote their afternoons to reading, writing stories and discussing their latest creations.⁵

1 Shen, 'Zhang Tianyi wenxue huodong nianbiao', 274.

2 Shen *ibid.*, 274; Jiang Muliang, 'Ji Zhang Tianyi' 记张天翼 in Zuojia yinxiang ji 《作家印象记》 (ed. Sima Wensen 司马文森) 59. Jiang Muliang recalls Zhang's childhood curiosity and habit of questioning friends and acquaintances about their experiences and daily life. Jiang Muliang, *ibid.*, 59.

3 Interview with Shen Chengkuan and Zhang Zhang, Beijing, 1. 4. 1981; Zhang's 'Old Ming's Story' 老明的故事, Shuixing 1:2 (11. 1934) owes its source to just such an occasion.

4 Interview with Shen Chengkuan and Zhang Zhang, Beijing, 1. 4. 1981.

5 Jiang Muliang, 'Ji Zhang Tianyi' 记张天翼 in Sima Wensen, ed., Zuojia yinxiang ji 《作家印象记》, Hong Kong, (11. 1949) 62.

Owing to these comparatively favourable circumstances, Zhang's publications during the years 1933 to 1936 number 58 short stories, 2 plays, 2 novels, one novella and several essays and works of literary criticism.

Zhang's prolific output during these few years accounts for his reputation amongst readers of Shanghai literary magazines and those who could afford to buy collections of his stories and editions of his novels. It also accounts for an unevenness in quality amongst his works published during these years. Demand for manuscripts was high amongst the various publishing houses that mushroomed in Shanghai during the mid 1930s and not surprisingly some of Zhang's works published during the period 1933-1936 show signs of having been hastily knocked together or unsystematically revised.¹

Thus, amongst the 58 short stories published between 1933 and 1936 can be found both works that are skilfully executed and also works that fail to achieve an effect.

One Year

Zhang's first work to be published in 1933 was the novel One Year 《一年》.² A postscript dated December, 1932 explains how and when the work was written: Zhang started writing the work in the autumn of 1929 and after writing by fits and starts, Zhang put the manuscript aside, rereading it some time in 1931; not satisfied with some parts of the work, and yet unable to bring himself to discard it altogether, Zhang went on writing it. On the occasion of the Japanese attack on Shanghai (28 January, 1932), Zhang claims that he lost everything

1 See below comments on One Year, 'Cheng Yeheng', 'Counter Offensive', 'Bearded Bei', etc. The same can also be said of Zhang's story 'Battalion Commander "Monk"', published in November 1932; see above p. 137.

2 Shanghai, Liangyou Book Publishing Company (1. 1. 1933).

in the bombardment with the exception of this one manuscript.¹
As a consequence he felt he simply must finish the work.

I have already pointed out the similarities between certain passages in 'The Leather Belt' and parts of One Year,² as well as the resemblance between the character Deng Bingsheng 邓炳生 in 'The Leather Belt' and Bai Muyi 白慕易 in One Year. If one takes into consideration that a large part of One Year was probably written in 1929 and that 'The Leather Belt' was first published on 10 July, 1931,³ it is possible to surmise that the experiences that gave rise to 'The Leather Belt' and a substantial part of One Year were the same.

One Year was, after The Pulse of the Age 《时代的跳动》,⁴ Zhang's second concerted attempt to write a conventional novel — by which I mean a long work of narrative fiction that attempts to render in-depth portraits of characters who exhibit development during the course of an unfolding plot — for the earlier 'A Diary of Ghostland' described by turns as a novel 长篇小说 and a 'novella' 中篇小说 does not fit the bill. Both from the point of view of form and of content, the tag 'novel' does not suit 'A Diary of Ghostland'; the diary-entry narrative technique with its fractured, often staccato effect does not lend itself to in-depth character portraits or a well-integrated plot. The content is that of the picaresque tale rather than the conventional novel.

Unfortunately One Year is not an unqualified success when measured against the expectations of novel readers. Zhang is noted for the skill with which he wrote short stories and in taking up his pen to write a full-length novel he was unable fully to make the necessary technical switch from short story

1 This incident calls to mind what happens to the 'hero' of The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions at the end of that work. He loses everything in the Japanese bombardment of Shanghai except for his life.

2 See above p.98ff.

3 Qingnian jie 1:5 (10. 7. 1931). It is also worth noting that Zhang reread the manuscript of One Year at some point in 1931; this may possibly have prompted him to write 'The Leather Belt'.

4 Hufeng Bookshop 湖风书店, Shanghai (30. 9. 1932).

writing to novel writing. One Year exhibits signs of being a series of short story-style incidents linked together by uninspired narrative passages.

Part of the problem with One Year is its inconsistent focus of interest. Three main characters occupy the author/narrator's interest: Bai Muyi 白慕易, Liang Meixuan 梁梅轩 and Li Yitai 李益泰. Partly because of a badly integrated plot and partly as a consequence of apparent whimsy on the part of the author/narrator, the reader's attention is diverted from one character to another for no discernible reason. In the fourth chapter entitled 'Two kinds of enforced leisure' 两种赋闲 attention shifts in the third section away from Bai Muyi and onto Li Yitai. Both characters are without positions and an interesting comparison between their differing forms of unemployment is established. At the start of Chapter 5 ('Agony' 痛苦), however, events are seen from Bai Muyi's viewpoint once more, but within the space of a few pages, the narrative viewpoint shifts again first to Wang Laoba 王老八, a relatively unimportant character, and then to Liang Meixuan; Liang Meixuan remains the centre of author/narrator interest to the end of the chapter. The sudden and unexplained switches in the focus of interest undermine the overall effectiveness of the novel. This defect is coupled with another failing; from time to time in One Year, the author/narrator becomes obsessed with a particular character and continues to follow the activities of this character well beyond what is necessary for the purposes of the plot. Such extravagance on the part of the author/narrator can be observed in the lengthy description of the activities of Li Yitai in Chapter Six ('Roses and cuffed ears' 玫瑰与耳光), activities which do nothing to advance the plot.

The final chapter before the postscript, Chapter Ten, is entitled 'News' 消息 and gives the impression that it was added as an afterthought by the author/narrator in an attempt to interpret the novel for the reader and ward off possible criticism.¹

¹ Interestingly this chapter is omitted from a Hong Kong edition of One Year published under the title Fu yun 《浮云》, Nanhua Bookshop, 南华书店, Hong Kong, 7. 1966.

In this short chapter Bai Jun 白駿, Bai Muyi's cousin, who is currently living in the Shanghai house of his uncle Yun Shigang 云士剛, learns to his astonishment that Bai Muyi has committed suicide. Bai Jun is visited by his old friend Wei Fugui 卫复圭. They discuss Bai Muyi's suicide and their present circumstances.

Bai Jun reveals that he is presently engaged in the education of peasant farmers and their children, explaining to them the meaning of terms like 'imperialism' 帝国主义 and 'local tyrants and evil gentry' 土豪劣绅. His analysis of present conditions trails off in unfinished sentences and confused comments. His conclusion is apparently: "... There are crowds of people who want to better themselves, but none of them know what really goes on" (... 想爬的人太多, 都是不知道一些真的事情 ...) Both the style and content of this last chapter contrast starkly with all that has gone before.

Bai Muyi's suicide, too, is unconvincingly bizarre: after sending a suicide note (without a stamp) to his wife, he dons his mortar-board and throws himself into the river. This drawing of a curtain over Bai Muyi, coupled with the news that Li Yitai has been arrested and shot, makes the ending to Chapter Nine appear altogether too pat, too slick. Earlier in the novel, in Chapter Eight, the other centre of reader interest, Liang Meixuan, had been likewise expunged.

Having drawn attention to the failings of One Year, it is only fair to point out its good points. The first chapter opens promisingly enough with bombastic conversation punctuated by bites of moon cake. The conversationalists appear to be well-off officials. They discuss two men who have just left: Liang Meixuan and his younger relative Bai Muyi, an ex-tailor who wants to secure a position in the official hierarchy. An atmosphere of laziness, superciliousness, and snobbery is carefully built up. The appearance and the nicknames of those engaged in conversation are described at some length. This lengthy description of human appearance marks a new

departure for Zhang. In the short stories, description of the appearance of characters is kept to a lean minimum, a few caricature-like strokes of his pen being enough to capture one or two distinctive characteristics that will stand for the whole. Thus the lengthier description of appearance in One Year seems to represent a conscious attempt on Zhang's part to alter his technique of describing characters to fit in with the broader demands of novel-writing.

Chapter Two also begins promisingly but quickly begins to exhibit failings. Attention switches away from the conversationalists of the previous chapter and onto the subject of their conversation: 'Mr. Bai Muyi, bathed in sweat, was trailing after Old Mr. Liang Meixuan' (白慕易先生一身的汗, 跟着梁梅轩老先生走.) Suddenly the author/narrator seizes an opportunity to make a satiric comment beyond what is called for by the demands of the plot; some wealthy ladies are buying goods in the open market (past which Bai Muyi and Liang Meixuan are walking), and the author/narrator reports that by doing their shopping here instead of letting their servants do it they each save 20 cents, exactly the cost of a ricksha ride home. Such diversions as this are acceptable given the scope and spread of a full-scale novel, but later in this same chapter an inordinate number of pages is devoted to describing Liang Meixuan's domestic circumstances. This is a case of the author/narrator becoming obsessed with one of his characters to the detriment of the forward progress of the plot.

In the succeeding chapters preoccupation with character portrayal results in all but complete abandonment of a plot thread. One is left with a few cameos and a general impression of a world made up of untalented functionaries desperately trying to better themselves by means of nepotism. In both One Year and The Pulse of the Age Zhang succeeds in painting a picture of a milieu, one stratum of contemporary society; in The Pulse of the Age he concentrates his attention on enlightened intellectuals in Nanjing and Shanghai, whilst in One Year the reader's attention is drawn to social-climbing members of the bourgeoisie.

A contemporary review of One Year by Wang Shuming 王淑明 (1902-)¹ levels the criticism that One Year like its predecessor 'A Diary of Ghostland' creates a picture of an unreal world. Though this criticism is true of 'A Diary of Ghostland', it is far less the case with One Year. Wang Shuming goes on to tick Zhang off for his tendency to be excessively subjective in making author/narrator comments. (... 他显然是犯着主观的叙述的毛病,). He concedes that Zhang is successful in describing the psychology, appearance, personality, movements of his characters and that he even does so with considerable humour. Wang Shuming's comments do not represent either useful or perceptive criticisms of One Year; quotes from the text intended to back up the critical argument are largely inapposite.

In following up the point made about Zhang's tendency to be excessively subjective in making author/narrator comments, Wang Shuming does, however, make the interesting point that some people attributed Zhang's frequent use of formulaic interruptions of the narrative such as 'Gentlemen readers' 读者诸君 to an attempt to make his works more readily acceptable to the masses: 又有人说作者是想将文艺大众化的手段, 真的应用于新作品中向来, 所以他既探取着旧式小说许多保存的手法, 将牠有效的应用于新的作品里去, 这样, 可以吸取广大的读者群众, 而也更容易获得艺术的效果。

Wang goes on to express his approval of attempts to make literary works more acceptable to the masses and his approval of the use of traditional narrative techniques as a means to achieving this end, but he advocates only selective use of these traditional narrative techniques suggesting that Zhang's frequently used formula 'Gentlemen readers' is not a suitable technique for use in modern fiction. Wang's comments highlight the problem faced by Leftist writers in the thirties who wanted to make their works available to a wider reading public. These writers were faced with the dilemma of whether to simplify their works so

1 Wenxue jikan 1:3 (7. 1934) 368-370.

that they would prove more easily readable by those readers with a limited amount of education (Wang makes the point that some of the political analyses contained in One Year are simplistic) at the expense of disaffecting better educated and more demanding readers. The alternative was to pay only lip-service to the calls for 'Literature for the masses' 大众化文艺 and write more sophisticated works that would almost inevitably preach to the converted and remain untouched by the unconverted. Zhang, seemingly conscious of this dilemma — his theoretical articles published in Beidou in 1932 certainly suggest he was — made attempts to resolve it. He moved away from stories that ridiculed intellectuals and members of the petit-bourgeoisie towards stories with a broad indistinct focus that told of agitation and revolt. Beginning with the story 'Back and Breasts' (published in February 1933) Zhang started to write of revolt and social injustice using a sharper focus and revealing more highly personalised sympathy with the victims of contemporary society.

The last of the military 'agitational' stories — 'The Road'

'The Road' 路¹ is in the same mould as the earlier 'The Twenty-one', 'The Bread Queue', 'The Last Train' and 'Hate'. It resembles most closely 'The Twenty-one' and 'The Last Train' and whilst reiterating certain aspects of the plots of these two stories, 'The Road' explores them a little more deeply and from a slightly altered standpoint.

The opening section creates an impression of activity and confusion. There are brief snatches of conversation and short narrative comments from the first person narrator. Eight or nine soldiers have encircled their comrades and are training rifles and machine-guns on them. They are addressed by their commander Chang daye 昌大爷 who had previously led his men on an expedition to mine the Japanese railway. Commander Chang declares, amidst interruptions, that they are surrounded on all sides by the enemy (the Japanese). He asks his men if

1 Dongfang zazhi 30:2 (16. 1. 1933).

they want to live or die. Then he goes on to tell them that there is only one way out -- to surrender. He threatens the soldiers who are surrounded that they will be killed if they fail to obey his order to surrender.

The narrator, who is clearly one of the soldiers who are surrounded, speaks for all of those in his group when he relates:

When he had said this much we all understood everything. All of a sudden, as though a casket had been opened, we [the narrator uses the mutually inclusive 咱们] all became clear as to what was going on. I tell you: damn it all, it was all a trap.

The narrator realises that Commander Chang must have sold them out to the enemy. After a long pause there are shouts of a large reward, and officer posts for the men if they surrender. One of the surrounded men suggests that if they surrender Chang will probably reap all the benefits. Once more Chang asks them to decide what they will do. One brave battalion commander dares to exhort his fellows not to give in to Chang. He is shot down. There are further exhortations to rush the men with guns. Those at the front are also shot down. Another battalion commander, Yu duizhang 余队长 walks forward with arms in the air. Using guile, he claims that he will follow orders. He asks, however, to have a word with Commander Chang. Given his chance, he throws Commander Chang to the ground and starts to strangle him. The others rush the eight or nine men with guns and overpower them. After extracting a confession from Commander Chang, Yu duizhang shoots him through the head. Chang had made a pact with the enemy to surrender his men in return for 20,000 pieces of silver.

In an ironic re-enactment of Commander Chang's earlier enquiry, asking his men if they wanted to live or die, Battalion Commander Yu leaps up and poses the very same question to the men. The response of the men is the same as before, but both question and answer intimate quite different things to the earlier exchange with Commander Chang. The men's shouts of "We want to live!" echo on all sides. Battalion Commander Yu takes charge and leads the men out of the valley in which they are

trapped. They burst through the enemy forces blocking the entrance to the valley. Some of the men are shot down, but most escape. Battalion Commander Yu is shot and falls from his horse. He urges the others to go on without him. The story ends thus.

Comparison of 'The Road' with the earlier 'The Last Train' and 'The Twenty-one' shows that all three contain a similar confrontation between soldiers and those who command them. In all three stories the outcome of this confrontation is the same: the common soldiers aided by one of their officers rebel against those who command them and proceed to act on their own initiative. In 'The Twenty-one', the survivors of battle cut their losses and head for safety; in 'The Last Train' and 'The Road' they face the enemy and fight. In 'The Twenty-one' and 'The Last Train' there is a long build-up to the moment of rebellion, during which discontent gradually makes itself increasingly manifest; in 'The Road', on the other hand, the story opens with the moment of confrontation. To their initial puzzlement, the ordinary soldiers and their middle-ranking officers are presented with an ultimatum by their commanding officer to which they cannot accede.

The group of 'agitational' stories that have military settings: conclusions.

This group includes 'Twenty-one', 'The Bread Queue', 'The Last Train' and 'The Road'. All four of these stories have characters who are military personnel, though the soldiers in 'The Bread Queue' are billeted in a military hospital.

The group is distinctive and homogeneous in its method of characterisation, the language used by the characters, and the realism of the descriptions. The characters in each story are very much alike; a group of men whose attitudes and intentions are very similar. A few individuals stand out, such as the one-legged Lin Baoyong 林保勇 in 'The Bread Queue' who dreams of overcoming his disability and becoming a five-star general, Shen Zhenguo 沈振国 in 'The Twenty-one' who

dares to give expression to the resentment felt by him and his fellow soldiers, and Yu duizhang 余队长 in 'The Road' who tricks his commanding officer, shoots him, leads his soldiers out of the trap they are in and finally loses his life in the endeavour. The other characters in each story tend to be more shadowy figures who are of a mind with the more colourful main character, helping to give the impression of a united group of soldiers who can be regarded as an indivisible unit. The language used by the characters is invariably the language of the barrack room. The soldiers are preoccupied with basic concerns and their language reflects their preoccupation. They talk in abrupt curse-filled sentences and the broken ends of conversation help to convey an atmosphere of tension, activity and sometimes confusion. Descriptions are realistic to the point of being disgusting. In 'The Road', for example, Yu duizhang shoots Commander Chang through the head:

Pow, pow! Pow! — Old Chang's head exploded,
and an eye-ball flew off god knows where.

(拍拍! 拍拍! — 昌大爷脑袋上
开了花, 一支眼珠子不知飞到了什么地方。)

Violence too is faithfully recorded, as for instance the shooting down in cold blood of those who voice opposition in 'The Last Train' and 'The Road'. All of these stories are seen from the point of view of the common soldier — there is always a marked conflict of interest between the leaders and those who are led — but what does change from story to story within the group is the narrative technique that is used. Both 'The Twenty-one' and 'The Road' have first-person narrators who are members of the group of common soldiers who rebel against their officers. 'The Bread Queue' and 'The Last Train' use a third-person narrative technique; the narrator observes the action for the most part dispassionately only occasionally giving way to a narrative remark that reveals sympathy with the situation in which the soldiers find themselves as in this example from 'The Last Train':

For a long time there was no sign of the bloody
train. (他妈的火车老没影子。)

Zhang's agitational stories with a military setting form part of a larger sub-group of stories that includes those that

deal with interaction between soldiers and peasants (e.g. 'Hate') and the agitational group of stories also includes stories that deal with agitation in a factory ('Little Peter') and agitation in rural areas ('San taiye and Guisheng'). The story 'The Bread Queue' is not a pure example of the sub-group 'agitational stories with a military setting' in that it describes wounded soldiers from a military hospital interacting with disgruntled townspeople. The agitation described in 'Little Peter' is ineffectual and cannot compare with the agitation described in 'agitational stories with a military setting'. 'San taiye and Guisheng' like Zhang's other stories dealing with agitation in rural settings follows a familiar pattern of attempts at rebellion by peasants against their oppressive exploiters, attempts which are ruthlessly and systematically put down.

An experiment in historic literary extrapolation - 'The Dream'

Zhang's next story 'The Dream' 梦¹ represents a reworking of part of the traditional vernacular novel The Water Margin 《水浒传》. 'The Dream' is the sole example of historic literary extrapolation to be found in Zhang's corpus of writings.² The part of The Water Margin that Zhang has picked out for inclusion in his story is the section that occurs at the end of Jin Shengtian's 金圣叹 (1608-1661) 70-chapter truncated edition of the earlier 100 and 120-chapter editions. Jin's edition appeared in 1644 although the preface is dated 1641.³ Zhang picks out the section of Jin's version that deals with the character Lu Junyi 卢俊义 (also known as Yuqilin 玉麒麟) and reworks it for his own purposes.

Let me briefly recall the story of Lu Junyi as it appears in Jin Shengtian's version of The Water Margin. Tricked by Wu Yong 吴用 into journeying to Liangshanbo 梁山泊,

1 Xiandai 2:3 (1. 1933).

2 An example of historic literary extrapolation in recent English literature is Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys, Andre Deutsch (1966) which tells the story of the first Mrs. Rochester, the mad wife in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre.

3 See R. G. Irwin, The Evolution of a Chinese Novel, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press (1966) 87,90.

Lu Junyi is captured by the robber band living there. He staunchly refuses to agree to become one of their number and is eventually allowed to return home. Upon his return to the capital he discovers that his wife is committing adultery with his servant. Reported to the civic authorities as a would-be rebel by his wife and servant, Lu Junyi falls into the hands of Grand Secretary Liang 梁中书. As he is being escorted to banishment by two rascals who have been bribed by his wife and her lover to murder him, Lu Junyi is rescued by his consistently faithful servant Yan Qing 燕青. Lu returns home and avenges himself on his wife and her lover by slaughtering them both. Having now placed himself firmly beyond the pale, he finds he has no choice but to return to Liangshanbo and seek sanctuary there. Having thrown in his lot with the robber band, he leads a righteous attack on Dongchangfu 东昌府, but meets with only limited success. Rescued by his robber band friends he goes back to Liangshanbo for the assigning of each hero to his celestial position. At this point Jin Shengtan supplies an ending to the story that is not to be found in earlier editions and brings the novel to an abrupt close; Lu Junyi has a dream in which he finds that he and all his 107 fellow brigands are bound and about to be executed. At the moment of his demise, Lu Junyi briefly glimpses a tablet which bears the inscription 'An empire at peace'.¹

Zhang for his part bases 'The Dream' on plot details that are to be found in Jin Shengtan's version of The Water Margin. Zhang, however, makes certain alterations and additions of his own, but there are nonetheless many references that recall the earlier story. Examples include references to Lu Junyi's wife:

His wife? — She was done for by his own hand!

(娘子? — 她是他亲手干了的!);

reflections on remarks made to Lu Junyi by his father; the presence of Lu's faithful servant 燕青; and so on. Such references place Zhang's work incontrovertibly in the ambience of The Water Margin but present the reader familiar

¹ For a reprint of Jin's last few paragraphs describing Lu Junyi's dream and critical notes about Jin's purpose in arbitrarily interpolating this passage, see Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎 Zhongguo wenxue lun ji 《中国文学论集》, Kaiming Bookshop, 开明书店, Shanghai (1934) 246-247.

with Jin Shengtan's version of The Water Margin with the problem of placing Zhang's 'The Dream' within the time scale of the original story. Of what point in the original story of Lu Junyi is the opening of 'The Dream' meant to remind the reader? Lu Junyi in Zhang's story is clearly in residence at Liangshanbo, his wife is dead and the treatment he received at the hands of Grand Secretary Liang is still fresh in his memory. On the second page of the story,¹ Zhang seems to fix his story for he refers to an event that takes place in the last chapter of Jin Shengtan's edition of The Water Margin:

That's right, they are all stars ~~reborn into~~
~~the~~ *reborn into the world,....*

(对呀, 他们都是星宿转世, 石
 碣上写得明白....)

(The assignment of each of the 108 heroes to a heavenly body is recorded in the last chapter of Jin's version of The Water Margin.) Thus the action of Zhang's story would seem to take place within the time scale of the last chapter of Jin Shengtan's version. Having established the position of Zhang's story in the time scale of the original story we must consider the extent to which Zhang's work recounts the same material as the original, interprets the original and expands on it, or treads new ground.

'The Dream' is a psychological study of Lu Junyi. Zhang portrays him wracked with remorse. He is pondering his past and laments the sequence of events that led him to act outside the pale of the law and forced him to throw in his lot with the robber band at Liangshanbo. Unable to sleep, he wanders about turning past events over in his mind. At one point, Lu's servant Yan Qing appears, but he says nothing of consequence and simply acts as a sounding-board for Lu's rambling reminiscences. Eventually persuaded by Yan Qing to return to his bed, Lu Junyi tumbles exhaustedly into bed. He starts to dream. He begins by dreaming that he is back in his childhood home and he hears his father's guests talking. Suddenly there is a shift and he dreams he is kneeling before Grand Secretary Liang with Shi Xiu beside him.² Again the dream shifts and Lu Junyi's father

1 p. 180 in the Jirenji Vol. 1 畸人集 (1945) edition of collected stories.

2 This incident is to be found at the beginning of Chapter 62 in Jin Shengtan's edition.

appears before him and reproves him. Lu begins to cry. At this point he wakes, hears conversation outside his window, realises that he has been dreaming and that he is in fact at Liangshanbo. He closes his eyes and returns to his dreams. He dreams he is drinking and feasting with his fellow bandits. Suddenly there are shouts to the effect that imperial troops are on their way. He tries to draw his sword but discovers he is bound, as are the other 107 bandits. (This incident is exactly the same as that to be found in Jin Shengtan's account of Lu Junyi's dream.) Next Li Kui 李逵 declares that Lu Junyi is to blame for the arrival of the imperial forces. The other bandits look at Lu Junyi accusingly. Lu expresses puzzlement about his supposed treachery. At this point Lu's dream becomes a m elange of tangled threads; his father is weeping beside him; Grand Secretary Liang is sitting in judgement over them; the bandits begin to cry; Song Jiang's 宋江 head rolls on to the ground. As the executioners approach him, Lu cries out and he wakes from his dream. With great relief he realises that it has only been a dream after all and he reproves himself for thinking too much.

In Jin Shengtan's version of Lu Junyi's dream there is no reassurance given to the reader that Lu Junyi's dream is only a dream, since Lu does not wake up from his dream when the axe descends upon his neck. Zhang therefore takes the story one step forward by pointing out the delusory nature of Lu Junyi's dream. Zhang's purpose in doing this is apparently to point out a lesson; waking in horror from his nightmare, Lu Junyi is immensely relieved that his dream was only a dream and the reader is presumably meant to imagine that Lu will now come to terms with his life in the robber band at Liangshanbo and dispense with his remorse about the past. Comparison of Zhang's story with Jin Shengtan's version shows that Zhang simultaneously recounts the same material as the original, interprets the original and expands on it, and treads new ground primarily by showing Lu Junyi's dream to be 'in fact' a dream. What then was Zhang's purpose in taking a well-known story, a popular character from a popular novel, and adapting both to new ends?

I believe that a clue to Zhang's purpose lies in the symbol or motif of the dream itself. During the course of 'The Dream' Lu Junyi wonders again and again if the horrors of his recent past are not after all only a dream. At one point, the omniscient narrator informs the reader:

These events seemed just like a dream

Perhaps as soon as he woke, he would still be sleeping in his own home in Beijing, with his wife lying beside him,

(这些事象只是一个梦.....
也许一醒来,他还睡在北京城自己
家里,他娘子躺在旁边,....)

During the course of 'The Dream', Lu Junyi moves from wishing that reality would prove to be only a dream, to being relieved that his nightmare is in fact only a nightmare and not a reality. From this it is possible to surmise that Zhang was treating of current attitudes amongst the educated classes to loyalty to a cause (presumably the Communist cause) and the problems such people faced in coming to terms with the reality of their situation. To surmise any further than this is dangerous and cannot be supported by evidence in the text. Zhang's story allows the possibility that it is an allegory about those amongst Zhang's contemporaries who found themselves outside the law as a result of their political activities but is at the same time sufficiently inexplicit as to avoid arousing the ire of Nationalist censors.

On a technical level, Zhang's 'The Dream' does attempt to retain the distinctive flavour of the original story. Dialogue, especially, recalls The Water Margin and some sentences have been lifted directly from the original, for example, Shi Xiu's impassioned tirade against Grand Secretary Liang:

You slave who are the slave to slaves,

(你这与奴才做奴才的奴才,)

reproduces exactly a line to be found in Chapter 62 of Jin Shengtan's version. Much of the description, however, as exemplified by the opening sentence of the story:

On the eastern horizon, someone had taken a bite

out of the dark blue sky, and let through a layer of purplish grey.

(东边地平线上, 有谁把蓝黑色的天咬破了一块, 现出一层紫灰色.)

is distinctly modern and surreal in style and makes a strong contrast with the olde-worlde dialogue. It is also worth noting that 'The Dream' contains a higher proportion of nature description than is usually to be found in Zhang's stories of this period. Apart from descriptions of the sky, there are also descriptions of birds and the landscape.

Zhang's first major exposure of social injustice --
'Back and Breasts'.

'Back and Breasts' 脊背与奶子 made its appearance on the literary scene not in magazine form but as No.58 of a series of 10 cent volumes 一角丛书 published by the Liangyou Publishing Company 良友图书印刷公司, Shanghai on 19 February 1933. The story is set against a background of village life and both the content and setting bear resemblances to Lu Xun's story 'New Year Sacrifice' 祝福: the kidnapping of Ren san sao 任三嫂 has parallels in the kidnapping of Xianglin sao 祥林嫂; and the atmosphere in Zhang's fictional village is not unlike that in Lu Xun's imaginary composite village Luzhen 鲁镇.

The story is divided into six numbered sections and there is a rumbustious first-person narrator who makes only rare appearances to interrupt the narrative and when he does he uses a style reminiscent of the old story-teller, a style which we have already seen Zhang use in earlier works like One Year and 'The Leather Belt'.

The story opens with villagers gossiping about Ren san sao who has achieved notoriety by leaving her husband and eloping with a farmer from another nearby village. She has already had a daughter by this farmer. The reader's attention is then directed to Zhangtaiye 长太爷, the senior member

of Ren san's clan and thus the person ultimately responsible for enforcing standards of morality amongst members of his family. The narrator, in directing the reader's attention to Zhangtaiye, introduces the ensuing drama with something akin to the self-satisfied glee of a professional conjurer:

Everybody [the village gossips] returned home to wait: there would be a play to watch. Just you see, Zhangtaiye will certainly have a part.

(大家就回去等着：有戏看。你瞧着，长太爷准得有一手。)

There follows a delightful description of Zhangtaiye exhibiting all kinds of nervous twitches as he lays his plans to secure the sexual favours of Ren san sao. Time and again the narrator observes Zhangtaiye picking his teeth, his legs twitching involuntarily when crossed. He goes over in his mind his earlier attempts to court Ren san sao. His first approach had been to tweak her cheek, but this only provoked angry curses. Deciding on a more subtle approach he had tried to win her over by offering her a jade ring. This too failed. Hypocritically he condemned her behaviour for not measuring up to old-fashioned codes of morality of which he demonstrably takes no notice.

The second section opens with the news that Ren san sao has been kidnapped and brought back to the village. Feigning ignorance of the details of the kidnap, the narrator invites the reader to go to the Deyilou teahouse 得意楼茶店 and listen to White-eyed Miao 繆白眼, the manager of the teahouse, describe the sequence of events:

I am not very clear about what method they used to seize her. Gentle readers if you want to know, then I must ask you to go to the Deyilou teahouse and listen to manager White-eyed Miao's description.

(怎么样个抓法我可不大明白。读者诸君要是想知道一下，那我得请你上得意楼茶店；听一听繆白眼老板的叙述。)

The narrator then sinks into the background and gives way to a dramatic presentation of White-eyed Miao's story. This is

not a monologue but rather a dramatised conversation between the manager of the teahouse and some of his customers. The reader learns that Ren san sao's relatives have succeeded in bringing her together with her daughter back to the village.

In the third section Zhangtaiye organises a council of relatives who mete out summary justice on Ren san sao. Zhangtaiye instructs Ren san to remove his wife's outer garments and lash her one hundred times. After the first hundred lashes, she is asked if she will agree never to return to her lover in the neighbouring village. She refuses to give such an assurance and the beating continues. When she swoons, they bring her round by pouring cold water on her, but she still will not agree to what is asked of her. The beating goes on until several of the relatives are weeping uncontrollably and Ren san can beat her no more.

In the fourth section we learn that after her beating she does not utter a word for two months. Then suddenly she regains her old self and begins to behave just as she used to. Zhangtaiye still bent on securing her sexual favours bides his time and finds an opportunity to accost her. She treats him with polite condescension. Zhangtaiye has decided in the meantime that if he is to woo her successfully he must give her lace which she is fond of. He gives her three pieces of lace, prevented by his own meanness from giving five pieces as he had originally intended. He takes an opportunity to fondle her as he stuffs the lace into her pocket since her hands are full with the rice she has just been washing. Ren san sao runs off saying that in a few days time she will give Zhangtaiye an answer.

In the fifth section Zhangtaiye plots with White-eyed Miao to secure Ren san sao for his private delectation. Ren san owes Zhangtaiye a large sum of money, so Zhangtaiye sends White-eyed Miao to inform Ren san that he is calling in the loan at the end of the month, knowing full well that Ren san has no means to repay him.

In the sixth section we learn that a piece of gossip is

going round the village. A beggar from the neighbouring village where Ren san sao's lover lives called on her and delivered a message. Ren san is worried by this because he is afraid that the possible surety for his debt may be planning to run away. He goes with White-eyed Miao to ask Zhangtaiye if he will agree to take Ren san sao in exchange for cancelling the debt. Zhangtaiye pretends that he is horrified by the impropriety of this suggestion. A compromise is reached whereby Ren san sao is to wait upon Zhangtaiye whenever he needs her services in return for an extension of the repayment term of the debt. In this way Zhangtaiye thinks to have his way with Ren san sao whilst maintaining respectability in the eyes of the other villagers. Zhangtaiye fondles her on a few occasions before arranging to meet her at a romantic spot after dark. Eventually Ren san sao arrives for the rendezvous and Zhangtaiye immediately starts to paw her. When he becomes excited she hits him over the head and runs off shouting insults at him. The next day, the villagers find that Ren san sao together with her lover and baby girl have all disappeared. Zhangtaiye, mad with anger, blames Ren san for letting his wife run off and clamours for the repayment of the debt.

This story is by turns amusing, shocking and moving. The narrative is skilfully controlled by the narrator who occasionally makes dramatic intrusions on the narration. These I have illustrated above in my résumé of the plot. The effect of these intrusions is to establish a conspiratorial relationship between reader and narrator; metaphorically the narrator is at the reader's elbow nudging him/her every time the narrator wishes to draw his/her attention to some aspect of the narration or story. Consider, for instance, this example from the narrative and the narrator's interpolated remarks that appear immediately after it:

As soon as Ren san sao be brought back they certainly must whip her till the flesh is raw on her back.

You'll say he must go 'humph' again, won't you
— Is he angry?

No.

On the contrary — His whole body went limp.

(任三嫂一找回来了准得打
烂她的脊背肉.....
你说他又得“噎”了吧——
他生了气？
不。
倒是——他全身软了一下。)

Zhang goes to some trouble to draw the reader into the act of narration, giving the reader the impression that he/she has a vital part to play in the dramatic unveiling of the story.

It was for this 'failing' that Wang Shuming in a review of One Year reproved Zhang soundly.¹ Wang without quoting chapter or verse suggested that Zhang's style of narration (addressing the reader directly and interrupting the narrative to make choice comments) was imitative of examples to be found in contemporary Western fiction. In almost the same breath Wang also suggested that Zhang had taken on the mantle of the story-teller in traditional vernacular fiction with the intention of making his works more acceptable to the ordinary reading public brought up on an almost exclusive diet of vernacular fiction 通俗小说. Be the value of Wang's criticisms as it may, what does seem certain is that Zhang was concerned about the readers of his works and was aware of the relationship that could and did exist between author, author/narrator, work and reader in his stories.

'Back and Breasts' is significant in Zhang's development as a writer of fiction for various other reasons. One distinctive aspect of Zhang's description of characters, is the isolation of an idiosyncrasy (a speech impediment, a nervous twitch, a gesture, a favourite word or speech pattern) and during the course of a story Zhang would seize on this or that example of idiosyncratic behaviour and reiterate it frequently until it almost comes to stand as a cipher, representing the character who exhibits it. This tendency in Zhang's character descriptions is exhibited in the novel One Year where Bai Muyi's cousin Bai Jun has the habit of suggesting that there are two reasons for his thinking or doing something, but when he has specified the first reason,

¹ See above p. 150.

he has either forgotten or cannot think of a second reason, and is left rapidly repeating 'the second reason the second reason the second reason' Bai Muyi for his part has a bad stammer and a comical habit of quoting classical phrases he cannot remember precisely or completely. In 'Back and Breasts', however, Zhang takes this facet of character description a step further by emphasising the evilness of a character by attributing exaggerated idiosyncrasies to that character, leaving the reader wondering whether the character exhibits a nervous twitch because he is evil or whether he is evil because he exhibits a nervous twitch. Zhang's description of Zhangtaiye is his most clearly exaggerated portrait of an evil character to date (Zhangtaiye picks his teeth unremittingly) and this characteristic of Zhang's character description becomes particularly noticeable in subsequent works, as for instance in the horrid foot-picking father in 'A Pillar of Society' 砥柱.¹

The portrait of Zhangtaiye is particularly good in that it skilfully portrays his hypocrisy and his lust. His hypocrisy is revealed when he uses White-eyed Miao to act as intermediary in recalling his loan to Ren san. White-eyed Miao reveals that he knows the recall of the loan to be no more than a ruse to secure Ren san sao. Thus, however strenuously Zhangtaiye attempts to express his horror at the impropriety of this suggestion the reader knows full well that Zhangtaiye is deceiving no one of his evil designs on Ren san sao. His lust is portrayed in graphic terms; the narrator seems to have weaselled his way inside his unsavoury mind. The reader learns that Zhangtaiye conceives of Ren san sao's skin as Gorgon fruit powder (茺实粉) or underdone steamed egg (没有蒸透的蒸鸡蛋). The bizarre and sadistic delight he takes in the thought of having Ren san sao stripped and beaten is startlingly shocking.

Graphic, no holds barred, realistic description is a characteristic we have already come to expect in Zhang's stories² and this story is no exception. The descriptions of Ren san sao before and during her beating are particularly striking examples:

1 Zuojia 1:2 (15. 5. 1936).

2 See especially the agitational stories 'The Twenty-one', 'Hate', etc.

Her breasts stood out massily: and even though they were covered by a layer of clothing, one could still make out where the nipples were.

(奶子高高地突出:隔了一层衣,可还瞧得出奶嘴子在什么地方。)

Over her whole body there was not a piece of flesh that remained intact. The shirt and trousers she had on had turned red.

(她全身没一片完整的肉。那身小褂裤成了红的。)

The attention of the reader is divided between the characters of Ren san sao and Zhangtaiye. Rather than foisting a straightforward contrast between good (in the form of Ren san sao) and evil (in the form of Zhangtaiye) on the reader, Zhang makes the character of Ren san sao of dubious morality. We know from the story that Ren san sao had borne her husband a son (though one gossip cruelly suggests this son may be a wild oat, the result of an infidelity on the part of Ren san sao), and had run off with a peasant farmer from a neighbouring village to whom she bore a daughter. By leaving her husband, running off with another man, and bearing that man's child, Ren san sao clearly offended against morality, but Zhang's story is told in such a way as to soften the gravity of Ren san sao's affront to conventional morality and engage the reader's total sympathy when at the end of the story Ren san sao hits out at Zhangtaiye and runs off to join her lover and child. In this and subsequent works like 'Smile' 笑¹ and 'My Wife' 我的太太² Zhang shows himself sympathetic to the problems faced by women in contemporary Chinese society. 'Back and Breasts' is however the only example in Zhang's corpus of a story in which a woman successfully escapes from her oppressors and the oppression in which she finds herself.

1 Xiandai 5:4 (1. 8. 1934).

2 In Yixing 《移行》 collection of stories, Liangyou Publishing House, Shanghai (24. 10. 1934).

'Back and Breasts' succeeds in presenting in what seems a highly realistic way a picture of village life warts and all. The struggles and machinations of the villagers, their foibles, quirks and habits are laid bare by the narrator so that when a villager chatting in the teahouse makes a remark in a lowered tone, the narrator immediately deflates this gesture of confidentiality by commenting archly: 'But those within ten or so feet of him could still hear what he said'.

During the period 1933-1936, Zhang went on to produce many stories that pretend to show realistic insights into life in the countryside, villages and small towns. In doing this he was probably following the principles and instructions of the League of Left-wing Writers of which he was an active member.

'Cheng Yeheng' and 'Counter Offensive' -- studies in form.

Zhang's story 'Cheng Yeheng' 成业恒¹ cannot be satisfactorily explained without at the same time considering his 'Counter Offensive' 反攻² for both stories are concerned with the same character Cheng Yeheng and share several plot facets. Comparison of the two stories is most interesting for the difference in narrative presentation that is revealed. 'Cheng Yeheng' is presented as a case study, comprising what purports to be an autobiographical account of his experiences by Cheng Yeheng (apparently published in a weekly periodical), a couple of newspaper articles and a diary written by Cheng Yeheng whilst in detention. These four documents are preceded by four lines written by the 'author' who claims that these documents fell into his hands and that the only change that he has made is to change the names of the people. This technique of dressing up a story as case study material is one that Zhang used earlier in his first long work 'A Diary of Ghostland' and it does, of course, have a famous precursor in Lu Xun's 'Diary of a Madman' 狂人日记.³ 'Counter Offensive' on the other hand has a lively first person narrator who is referred to as Tianyi

1 Dongfang zazhi 30:5 (1. 3. 1933).

2 Wenxue 1:3 (1. 9. 1933).

3 Xin qingnian 4:5 (5. 1918) 414-424.

天翼 by Cheng Yeheng at the end of the story:

翼 "And what happened to Li Tianjun," I asked.

"That fellow Tianjun is still at Phoenix Mountain, but he is not as well-off as before: and people who believe in him are not as numerous as they were Tianjun, ha! Your name is Tianyi, you share the generation name Tian in common with Tianjun."

(「李天君呢?」我问。

「那位天君还在凤凰山,不过没从前阔气了:相信他的人没有从前那么多....天君,吓!.....你叫做天翼,同天君是「天」字排房哩。」)

An ebullient style of first-person narration is a technique which we have grown used to, appearing as it does in such stories as 'Lackadaisical Love-story', 'The Leather Belt' and the novel One Year, but this is the first story in which Zhang as author has identified himself unequivocally and unreservedly with the narrator. Another distinctive aspect of the style of narration in 'Counter Offensive' is the arrangement of the story. Using a style of arrangement similar to that used by Lu Xun in his story 'Upstairs at the Restaurant' 在酒楼上¹ Zhang begins and ends his story with a group of men drinking together. The group includes Cheng Yeheng and the narrator who is as we learn at the end of the story [Zhang] Tianyi himself. Like Lu Xun's story 'Upstairs at the Restaurant' the main body of the story appears as a flashback or recollection framed within a context-giving scenario which signifies the literary 'present'. This has the effect of returning the story at its end to its original starting-point, thus imposing a degree of integrity on the story it might not otherwise possess. As in 'Lackadaisical Love-story', 'Counter Offensive' is divided up into sections, sections which are marked off by newspaper-style headings and which indicate a shift in time or place. Examples of these captions are "Ha, Li Tianjun!" 「吓,李天君!」 and 'The army of the Northern Expedition arrives' 北伐军到了。

¹ Xiaoshuo yuebao 15:5 (10. 5. 1924) 1-7.

Both stories occur in an identifiable historical setting. In 'Cheng Yeheng', the diary entries that make up Document 4 are dated with the day of the month, but this apart there is no more specific indication of when the events described are meant to have taken place. 'Counter Offensive', however, fixes events more precisely. There are references to the Northern Expedition which took place in 1926-27. There is also an explicit reference to Monday, 19 March 1930
 中华民国十九年，三月大，十九日，星期一，
 the date when Cheng Yeheng began a two-year term of imprisonment. It appears therefore that the events described in both stories are meant to have taken place over a number of years starting before 1926 and ending in 1932.

The basic plot underlying both stories is bizarre, relying heavily on deception, subterfuge and cases of mistaken or confused identity. The first document in 'Cheng Yeheng' starts by describing how Cheng Yeheng came to join the nationalist forces following the destruction of his home by Communist guerillas. Cheng is bent on exacting revenge. When Liu Ming 刘明, a Communist agent, is caught by the nationalists, Cheng is greatly embarrassed because he has known Liu Ming since childhood and they attended the same school.¹ As the first document unfolds it becomes clear that Cheng has good reason to hate both Communists (for destroying his home) and 'local tyrants and evil gentry' 土豪劣绅 (for oppressing his family). The local nationalist commandant gives Cheng Yeheng the task of executing Liu Ming, presumably as a test of his loyalty and resolve. Cheng Yeheng's desire to exact revenge on Communists is insatiable and leads to his downfall. Whilst on a mission with Platoon commander Zhang 张排长, Cheng persuades him that they should dress up as Communist troops and attack a nearby group of Communist soldiers, thus taking them by surprise. Dressed in their disguise, they persuade a couple of old women to take them to the district commander, whom they then order to take them to where the 'other' Communist forces are stationed. The district commander, however, leads them

¹ This calls to mind the betrayal of an old school friend by Shu Keji the protagonist in 'Predestination and Prognostication'.

straight into a trap, Cheng Yeheng is under the misapprehension that these troops are Communists but they are in fact on his own side, and because he and his fellow-soldiers are disguised as Communists it is not surprising that troops on their own side fail to recognise them and attack them as they would the enemy. Cheng interrogates some of the soldiers he has taken prisoner, but he is incapable of eradicating his assumption that these soldiers are Communists. They for their part address him as 'Bandit army gent' 匪军先生. Upon Cheng's return to headquarters he is not surprisingly arrested.

The second and third documents are newspaper articles which give brief descriptions of Cheng Yeheng's alleged crimes.

The fourth document is Cheng's diary written whilst being held in detention. Cheng is put in a cell with several Communist prisoners. His fellow prisoners consider him to be a representative of the 'local tyrants and evil gentry' and bully and intimidate him as a result. He pleads unsuccessfully with the prison governor to have himself moved to another cell. His suspicious cellmates also wonder whether he is an undercover police agent planted in their cell as a trick. One by one these cellmates are taken away to be executed. Cheng becomes increasingly distraught. He goes before the prison governor who tells him that he knows him to be innocent, but that he cannot release him because he is under orders from above to hold him. The remaining cellmates under the impression that Communist forces are fast approaching the town tell Cheng Yeheng that he will be the first for the chop when they arrive. Seized with terror, he begins to question his own sanity. The story ends with the imminent prospect of his release.¹

The significance of the story would appear to be the way in which it points out the danger of trying to occupy the middle ground in 1920s China. Cheng Yeheng loathes both the Communists and the 'local tyrants and evil gentry'; this leads him to join

¹ Cheng Yeheng's sojourn in prison has parallels with Li Jingye's prison experiences in 'From Emptiness to Fullness'.

the ranks of the Nationalist forces stationed in his area. Cheng meets, however, with mistrust from all those who encounter him and his rather crass behaviour in dressing up like a Communist partisan confirm the Nationalist commander in his suspicion that Cheng is a Communist infiltrator. Ironically when Cheng is closeted in prison with a cell full of Communist prisoners he is taken for one of the 'local tyrants and evil gentry'.

Giving voice to the unenviable position he finds himself in, he declares in his final diary entry:

.... the local tyrants and evil gentry say I am a Communist, the Communists say I am one of the local tyrants and evil gentry. Both sides are our enemies. So I am caught between two enemies, and am at the end of my tether.

(.... 土豪劣绅说我共产党，共产党说我是土豪劣绅。两边都是我们的仇敌。我就给夹在两种仇敌中间，走头无路哉。)

Zhang's attitude as author/narrator towards his character Cheng Yeheng is certainly not explicitly stated in this first version of Cheng Yeheng's story. The narrator in so far as there can be said to be a narrator in this story remains detached from the details that are related and there is no attempt to coerce the reader's sympathy for Cheng's plight. Zhang's attitude towards Cheng is if not ambiguous, at least unclear; it is interesting to note that neither 'Cheng Yeheng' nor 'Counter Offensive' are to be found in recent selections of Zhang's works.

'Counter Offensive' presents Cheng Yeheng's story in a much bolder manner than the earlier 'Cheng Yeheng' and the story is decidedly humorous in this second version.

The opening section serves to introduce the narrator and Cheng Yeheng to the reader by revealing them with some of their drinking companions. The narrator quickly seeks an excuse to effect an explanatory flashback:

He [Cheng Yeheng] fished out some documents from his briefcase. He said that at that time he had been a delegate to the prefectural party headquarters and head of the workers' department in their prefecture, and in their party headquarters

No, if I tell it like this it must be unclear. I really must start my story from quite a few years earlier and then it will be alright. So let me start from quite a few years earlier:

(他掏出皮包里的文件。他说他那时候在他们那县里当县党部的委员兼工人部长，他们党部里.....)

不，这么着可说不明白。非得从好几年前以前说起才行。就从好几年前以前说起吧：.....)

Having provided himself with an excuse to backtrack to an earlier moment in time, Zhang as narrator reveals the power struggle that took place in Cheng Yeheng's home area between the various civil authorities, the communists, the Nationalist Party, the 'local tyrants and evil gentry', the peasant associations, etc., after Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yatsen) established the Republic in 1911.

The narrator picks up the story at the moment when Cheng Yeheng is being advised by Duyan long 独眼龙, Shier 史二 and You cai 有才 to leave home with them immediately as Cheng and Wang Botao 王伯陶 have been accused by some mysterious, undesignated 'them' "他们" of being 'traitors to the party' (again the party is not specified but is presumably meant to be the Nationalist party). Persuaded by the warning given him by his friends, Cheng leaves home with them and goes to Liujiaping 刘家坪. He gives every appearance of being a revolutionary 革命的, pledged to destroying 'local tyrants and evil gentry' and eradicating superstition.

In the next section, marked by a topic indicator, "Ha, Li Tianjun!" 『吓，李天君！』 the reader's attention

is shifted to Li Tianjun, a 'local tyrant', and his followers. A certain prefectural governor Wang 王知县 wishes to be favoured with an audience with Li Tianjun and he enlists the aid of Qian Shuhe 钱叔和 to make it possible. A message comes for Wang that Li Tianjun will agree to see him if he agrees to certain conditions. Li Tianjun claims that governor Wang was a snake in a previous incarnation so he insists that Wang sprawls on 49 bales of straw during the audience. The reader is treated to a hilarious description of governor Wang sprawled in hay and itchy with bugs. He is told to bow 49 times to Li Tianjun which puts a huge strain on his back which is unused to such exertion.

At this point in the narration, the narrator once again pops up and takes the reader in hand:

Li Tianjun sat quietly there

There were still 37 bows to go. Let's first go and visit Old Mr. Qian Shuhe.

(李天君静静地坐在那儿.....
还有三十七拜哩。我们先去访问钱叔和老先生吧。)

The narrator then proceeds to describe the lifestyle of Li Tianjun and his cronies. Fornication and opium-smoking are their main preoccupations. The reader learns that Qian Shuhe and Liu Zhenren 刘真人 are plotting against Cheng Yeheng. The narrator also reveals that the peasant tenant farmers who rent land from Li Tianjun are exploited not only by Li but also by the middleman Liu Zhenren who collects the rents and takes a cut of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ % for himself. This exploitation of peasant farmers is a common and recurrent theme in subsequent stories like 'Wanren Association' 万仞约¹ and 'Retribution' 报应.²

By leading the reader into Li Tianjun's boudoir and opium den, the narrator is able to reveal Li Tianjun as a weak, ineffectual clown dependent on opium. At one point Li Tianjun's

1 Wenxue 3:5, 6 (1. 11. 1934, 1. 12. 1934).

2 Wenxue 2:2 (1. 2. 1934).

wife arrives at the boudoir and begins to have an argument with Li Tianjun's concubine. When the two women start to fight, Li Tianjun is powerless to stop them fighting. Just as Li Tianjun is congratulating himself on the large sum of money he managed to extract from governor Wang and wondering how best to deal with the threat posed by Cheng Yeheng and his supporters, the narrative is interrupted by the sub-title 'The army of the Northern Expedition arrives' 北伐军到了。

The reader's attention is diverted to Cheng Yeheng and Wang Botao who because of their military success are hailed as saviours by the populace. Cheng makes a speech to the assembled townsfolk in which he says 'We must overthrow local tyrants and evil gentry.' ("我们应当打倒土豪劣绅。")

Li Tianjun sends Liu Zhenren to see if Cheng and Wang can be bribed. Liu is sent packing. Cheng and Wang plan to use Li Tianjun's property as a school but the other civil authorities have different ideas. The prefectural government wants to confiscate Li Tianjun's wealth to build a highway. Faced with a conflict of interests Cheng and Wang decide to await instructions from the provincial party authorities. In the meantime Cheng and Wang go on with the task of producing an inventory of Li Tianjun's property. Li Tianjun and Liu Zhenren are placed in custody at the Public Security Bureau.

But there are still problems within the civil infrastructure as is revealed in the next section entitled 'Quarrels erupt within' 内部闹别扭. Cheng's former friends Duyan long and You cai have now turned against him because of his refusal to reduce the tax levied on peasant farmers. The Peasants' Association is also in opposition to Wang and Cheng. When disorder breaks out Li Tianjun and Liu Zhenren escape from detention and strike a bargain with Cheng and Wang. Li Tianjun agrees to give them assistance in return for the restoration of his property to him.

The next section is entitled 'An Unsettled Year' 不安定的一年. Cheng Yeheng, his followers and Li Tianjun's

household flee temporarily to a neighbouring prefecture where they take sanctuary until the civil authorities regain control of their home town. After a fortnight or so, the town is once more in the hands of the civil authorities, but Li Tianjun and his cronies have also recovered some of their old power. The leading local officials are now in the pocket of Li Tianjun, and at Liu Zhenren's suggestion Li agrees to a plot to discredit Cheng Yeheng by dubbing him a "communist".

The situation becomes even more confused when Cheng Yeheng's home is raided by the communists. Although much aggrieved by this, Cheng continues to urge the populace to act against the local tyrants and evil gentry.

First efforts to discredit Cheng fail, but Li Tianjun, Liu Zhenren and Qian Shuhe come up with a more sophisticated plan: they arrange for someone to perjure himself before the prefectural governor by saying that Cheng is a Communist. Cheng is arrested and spends two years in jail as a result.

Returning the narrative time to the present the narrator once more makes his presence felt:

Cheng Yeheng thus came to spend two years in jail.
 Enough, this story can at this point COME TO A CLOSE
 (成业恒就这么着坐了两年班房。
 得了,这故事到这里可以
 告一个结束)

The action then returns to Cheng and his drinking companions.

'Counter Offensive' can be seen to cover some of the same ground as the earlier 'Cheng Yeheng' but at the same time the detailed exposure of the part played by Li Tianjun in setting Cheng up helps to fill in many of the gaps that exist in the earlier story.¹

¹ The reworking of essentially the same plot material from several different standpoints has some particularly noteworthy examples in modern English literature: cf. Lawrence Durrell's 'Alexandrian Quartet' Balthazar, Clea, Mountolive and Justine and more recently Alan Ayckbourn's cycle of three plays The Norman Conquests.

'Counter Offensive' is distinguished by its use of an ebullient first-person narrator, with Zhang performing the role himself, and also by its combination of cynicism and irony. We have already observed Zhang using cynical comment to achieve satirical effects in the novel One Year; rich ladies do their own shopping to save money and spend the money that they save by not sending their servants, on riding home in a ricksha. In 'Counter Offensive' cynical comment is most frequently used in order to satirize Li Tianjun. At one point in the story, Qian Shuhe goes to visit Li Tianjun. He interrupts Li Tianjun sitting in judgement over two of his relatives accused of committing adultery. He uses a barbaric chance method of ascertaining their guilt or innocence. As luck would have it, they are found guilty and are to be punished by being beaten and fined. The chance nature of Li Tianjun's decision-making process is satirised further when the narrator goes on to describe Li Tianjun's indecision when faced with the problem of deciding whether or not he should knock a piece of ash from his shoe. This part of the story is not essential to the plot and clearly serves to fill out the character of Li Tianjun. The cynical way in which Li Tianjun and his actions are portrayed is further reinforced by earlier descriptions in the story that show him to be a corrupt and despotic individual who clearly ought not to have the power to sit in judgement over other people.

The use Zhang makes of irony in 'Counter Offensive' is best illustrated by the coincidence which leads to Cheng Yeheng being summoned to go before the prefectural governor to answer the charge of being a Communist agent at just the moment when he is taking part in a ceremony dedicated to the memory of Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yatsen).

'Counter Offensive' unlike the earlier 'Cheng Yeheng' does not concentrate exclusive attention on the character of Cheng Yeheng. A considerable part of its length is devoted to describing Li Tianjun, his lifestyle and his all too human foibles. The description of Cheng Yeheng's character, such as it is, does not, however, reveal him to be the exact opposite of Li Tianjun, e.g. brave and honest. Cheng Yeheng, too, has

his weaknesses. When for instance he addresses a crowd of enthusiastic townspeople after his successful military enterprise he is almost overcome with nervousness. Whilst making an inventory of Li Tianjun's possessions, he deliberately breaks a pot which one of Li Tianjun's servants says contains a demon. After Cheng boldly declares that he does not believe what the servant says the narrator goes on to reveal Cheng's sensitivity by pointing out that he shivered involuntarily when he took hold of the pot. After a suspenseful pause, Cheng smashes the pot on the ground and shows that it contains only muck and ash. Cheng is also shown to be a man of dubious integrity. In spite of consistently delivering tirades against the evil represented by such 'Local tyrants' as Li Tianjun, Cheng is forced at one point in the story to come to a pragmatic understanding with Li Tianjun in order to maintain his position in the town.

Both 'Cheng Yeheng' and 'Counter Offensive' portray Cheng Yeheng as a man who tries to steer a middle course but who inevitably pleases no-one. In the first version, Cheng tries to balance his implacable hatred of the Communists against his anger towards the 'local tyrants and evil gentry', but he is mistaken first for a communist and then having been put in prison in a cell together with real communists, he is thought by them to be one of the 'local tyrants and evil gentry', or perhaps even a disguised police agent. The second version of the story, 'Counter Offensive', also portrays Cheng as trying to steer a middle course. Little is made of Cheng's hatred of Communists, whilst his desire to bring 'local tyrants and evil gentry' to justice appears single-minded. Finally forced, by circumstance and insufficient power, to compromise himself, Cheng falls prey to the machinations of Li Tianjun, and ends up doing a two-year stretch. Thus Cheng is no glamourised copybook 'hero', but rather a character with the best of motives who is caught up in circumstances too strong for him. Zhang's treatment of Cheng Yeheng is overall sympathetic but not eulogistic.

As has already been pointed out both 'Cheng Yeheng' and

'Counter Offensive' have stylistic prototypes in Zhang's earlier fiction. 'A Diary of Ghostland' is the precursor of 'Cheng Yeheng' and the narrative style of 'Counter Offensive' calls to mind that used in 'Lackadaisical Love Story'. Having noticed these stylistic similarities one is faced with the problem of fixing the position of these two stories in Zhang's creative development. Do either or both stories belong to earlier strands in Zhang's literary development? Should they be more properly grouped with Zhang's earlier stories? The explicit reference to a date in the second story 'Counter Offensive' — Cheng began a two-year period of internment on 19 March 1930 and at the end of the story he is at liberty — implies that the story was written some time between March 1932 and the date of its first publication in September 1933. Whilst the historical clues as to when 'Cheng Yeheng' was written are far less explicit, the story would, on stylistic grounds at least, seem to have been written before 'Counter Offensive'. Whether these two stories represent the continuation of experimentation with stylistic techniques already well-established in Zhang's repertoire of stylistic techniques used between 1929 and 1932, or whether they are making anachronistic appearances amongst Zhang's 1933-1936 fiction, or even whether they mark a temporary hesitation on Zhang's part after writing his crucial work 'Back and Breasts' are all hypotheses that cannot on current evidence be tested.

'A Prosperous Year' — oppressors v. the oppressed, rich v. poor.

'A Prosperous Year' 丰年¹ appeared between the publication of 'Cheng Yeheng' and 'Counter Offensive' and represents a continuation of Zhang's studies of class conflict and exploitation. A large proportion of the stories written between 1932 and 1936 deal with class conflict and exploitation of poor people by the rich. Other notable examples from later in this same period are 'Honeymoon Life' 蜜月生活,² 'Retribution' 报应,³ 'Smile' 笑,⁴ 'Warren Association' 万仞约,⁵

1 Xiandai 2:6 (4. 1933).

2 Shenghuo zhoukan 8:36 (9. 9. 1933).

3 Wenxue 2:2 (1. 2. 1934).

4 Xiandai 5:4 (1. 8. 1934).

5 Wenxue 3:5 (1. 11. 1934) 3:6 (1. 12. 1934).

'Boys and Girls' 儿女们, ¹ 'Qingming Festival' 清明节 时节 ² etc. But whereas most of the successive studies of class conflict and exploitation have rural settings, this story has an urban background.

'A Prosperous Year' is the story of Qian Gensheng 钱根生 who comes from the poverty-stricken countryside to Shanghai in order to enlist the aid of his relative Chen Qi 陈七 who works as a bodyguard in a wealthy Shanghai household. On account of a good harvest, there is a glut of grain on the market, and Gensheng has been unable to sell what he has harvested. Chen Qi agrees to ask the master of the household for help for his relative, but his entreaties meet with failure. Gensheng and Chen Qi both ask other members of the family for help but to no avail. Gensheng, driven increasingly to distraction and worried sick about his wife and family, is led first to mug someone for 60 cents, and finally to attacking the head of the household (老爷) and running off with his purse. In the ensuing commotion, Chen Qi shoots Gensheng as he is making his escape, unaware that his relative is in fact the thief that everyone is shouting about. The story ends with the arrival of a doctor to tend Laoye's head which he had cut open when Gensheng knocked him down. Only Chen Qi comes to Gensheng's aid.

What might otherwise be a simple and straightforward story is made complex by certain moral questions thrown up by the story and the conflict of interests and values amongst those who are participating in the story.

If one seeks to identify Zhang's motive for choosing such a plot as this and for writing it up in the way that he does, then one comes to the conclusion that his main interest in this story is analysing Gensheng's reaction to his impossible situation. At the end of the story Zhang sensibly refrains from interpreting his story or taking sides or pointing out right and wrong as he sees it, preferring to hold up a particular example of a universal dilemma for his readers to consider for themselves.

¹ Wenxue jikan 1:4 (16. 12. 1934).

² Wenxue 5:1 (1. 7. 1935).

What then are the techniques that Zhang uses in order to make this story an effective example of his literary craft? First, he uses an impersonal third person narrative technique which allows him the peripatetic omniscience which allows access to both the living-room of the wealthy family and the servants' quarters. Secondly, using the technique of only revealing the bare minimum necessary, the reader's interest is whetted by a snatch of conversation overheard by Chen Qi as he leaves a room after speaking to the master of the house. He overhears someone say: "When the harvest is good, it is good for everyone" (『年成好, 什么人都 有好处』) Chen Qi does not fully comprehend this remark but the implication is that the wealthy family speculate in grain and when they talk of a good harvest being good for all they really mean good for themselves. This technique forces the reader to become involved in making his/her own deductions. Thirdly, Zhang analyses at close quarters the mentality of someone driven to desperate lengths by force of circumstance. Describing Gensheng's state of mind after he has mugged someone of 60 cents, regretted his action, thought to return the money, and been mugged himself, the narrator says:

He [Gensheng] was still choked with emotion: he did not himself know why it was — whether in fact it was because the 60 cents he had snatched had been taken off him, or because he had been unfair to the little fellow.

(那个还抽抽咽咽着: 他自己也不知道为什么 — 到底是因为抓来的六毛钱给抢去了, 还是为了对那小个子不起。)

The narrator thus climbs inside the head of the character and conducts a psychological analysis. Fourthly, use is made of the technique of contrast. The secure decadent lifestyle of the wealthy family — they drink, smoke, take opium, play the piano, etc. — provides a sharp contrast with the breadline existence of Gensheng's family and his fear that his wife may despair and commit suicide by jumping in a well.

The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions —
slapstick or satire?

Zhang's next work to appear was The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions 《洋泾浜奇侠》.¹ This, like One Year and Pulse of the Age, was a full-length novel describing contemporary China. The novel is divided into 14 chapters (One Year by comparison has only 10 unnumbered chapters) and is set for the most part in Shanghai. The 'hero' of the novel, 26 year-old Shi Zhaochang 史兆昌 is a romantic youth who lives in a fantasy world where Daoist magic and gongfu 功夫 feats count for everything. The novel has scarcely any pretensions to seriousness and as a result occupies that unhappy middle ground between satire and farce.

Soon after the novel had finished being serialised in Xiandai, it was reviewed in the same magazine by Wang Shuming.² Wang, as in his subsequent review of One Year, reproves Zhang for writing unrepresentatively by choosing to set his novel in the 'semi-colonial' quarter of Shanghai when practically everywhere else in China could be said to be unlike Shanghai. Wang also compares The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions with Cervantes' Don Quixote, a comparison also made by C.T. Hsia.³ Labouring his comparison, Wang goes on to point out similarities between the character of Don Quixote in Cervantes' novel and the character of Shi Zhaochang in Zhang's. They both love to read knight-errant adventure fiction; Don Quixote has a disciple in Sancho (Panchez), whilst Shi Zhaochang has the family servant Xiao Wang 小王 under him, etc. C.T. Hsia, for his part, compares Zhang's novel with Lao She's Zhao Ziyue 《赵子曰》 and points out that the novel "owes a great deal to Don Quixote and popular Chinese adventure fiction for its conception of the gullible man as hero".⁴ Wang's main thesis is that Zhang's

1 Serialised in Xiandai 3:1-6, 4:2-5 (1. 5. 1933 - 1. 3. 1934).

2 For Wang's review of The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions see Xiandai 5:1 (5. 1934) 209-212.

3 See A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, 231.

4 Hsia, 231.

novel falls down because Zhang is under the spell of Don Quixote, a novel satirising Spanish feudal society in the middle ages, which he feels is an inappropriate model for the description of 20th century China.¹

C. T. Hsia, on the other hand, has nothing but praise for the novel:

In The Strange Knight of Shanghai (i.e. The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions) Chang Tien-i (i.e. Zhang Tianyi) achieves a very delightful comic novel. In literary form, his [Zhang's] novel is a burlesque, but in possession nevertheless of satiric brilliance and unusual comic verve.²

This conflicts with Wang's appraisal of the novel; Wang thinks that Zhang's satire goes too far to the point that it slips into comedy, by which he presumably means the equivalent of Western farce or slapstick. (然而象史兆昌这个人, 我们看了总觉得作者太把他讽刺得过分, 而使讽刺流于滑稽.....)

Thus what Wang sees as a failing, C.T. Hsia sees as a virtue. Though Wang's critique of The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions is sounder than his article on One Year, both his criticisms and those of C. T. Hsia are based on deeply entrenched premises and preconceptions.

An interesting exchange took place in the pages of Xiandai magazine after the first instalment of Zhang's novel had appeared. A reader named Yi Xincheng 易新成 wrote a letter critical of Zhang's work to the editor of Xiandai. The letter was published under the title 'Zhang Tianyi does not know how to play mahjong' 张天翼不会玩麻将.³ The editor of Xiandai replied to some of Yi Xincheng's criticisms, and the following month Zhang put forward his own defence in a letter entitled 'The writer popped up in midstream' 「作者从半腰里跳了出来」.⁴ Yi Xincheng makes two points. One is quite trivial and deals with his discovery of a mistake

1 Graham Greene has recently made good use of the Don Quixote legend to describe 20th century Spain in his novel Monsignor Quixote,

2 Hsia, 231

London, 1982.

3 Xiandai 3:2 (1. 6. 1933) 313, 314.

4 Xiandai 3:3 (1. 7. 1933) 435.

in Zhang's description of a game of mahjong. His other point is much more interesting, dealing as it does with author/narrator intervention:

When we read old novels, sometimes just when we are feeling totally absorbed in the story, the author suddenly pops up in midstream and with a "Dear reader" goes on and on at some length, which can make us feel jaded, can it not? And it is certain to make us feel that it spoils the fun.

Mr. Zhang Tianyi in his other works, has always been very conscientious in his descriptions, but this time in The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions, I do not know whether out of laziness or out of a need to show off, he even goes as far as making interpolations with lots of 'Gentlemen readers, gentlemen readers', which I always think detracts greatly from the work's intrinsic significance.

(当读一些旧小说,有时我们的心灵正和书中融合一片的时候,忽然作者在半腰里跳了出来:「着官....」唠唠叨叨说了一大篇话,会使我们感到乏味吧?而且一定会以为太杀风景。

张天翼先生在别的作品里,都很肯认真描写,这回在这篇《洋泾浜奇侠》之中,不知是偷懒还是卖弄,竟「读者诸君,读者诸君」的从中介介,我总以为太失去了他自己的意义。)

Yi Xincheng goes on to liken Zhang's technique to a Peking opera convention whereby actors address the audience directly to explain who is who, the name of the play, what is happening, etc.

The editor(s) of Xiandai, probably either Shi Zhecun or Du Heng or both append a brief reply to Yi Xincheng's letter. It is claimed that authorial remarks interrupting the narrative and prefaced by such formulae as "Gentlemen readers" are not limited to old Chinese novels but are also often to be found in

the most recent examples of Western fiction. The appositeness of Yi Xincheng's comparison of authorial interruptions with the conventions of Peking Opera is contested and the writer's freedom to choose any narrative method upheld.

Zhang for his part amusingly counters Yi Xincheng's criticisms a month later:

Dear Mr. Xincheng,

On reading "A thought after reading The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions",¹ I learned that the author of the work 'in question' had made a mistake about mahjong, and that Mr. Editor insists that our Mr. Zhang does not know how to play this game. To play mahjong is a national characteristic, so wouldn't being unable to play be extremely [unpatriotic]. For this reason I must apologise, and I have no choice but to once again like the "author popping up in midstream" make a statement.

.... From a young age I started to play mahjong, and there cannot possibly be any error. Yesterday when I saw the censure of me in Xiandai, I was dumbfounded for a long time and could not make head or tail of it, and I do not know where my mistake lies.

(新成先生，
感想，读『读洋泾浜奇侠后的一个感想』，说『该』稿作者弄错了麻将，而编者先生就一口咬定咱姓张的不会又这玩意。又麻将是咱们的民族性，不会又岂不很不那个。因此对不起，非又要『作者从半腰里跳了出来』声明一下不可。

... 很小时候就打过牌，... 一点也错不了。昨见《现代》上对我的指指，楞了老半天摸不着头脑，不知错在什么地方。)

Zhang while not answering Yi Xincheng's main charge directly,

¹ This is the subtitle of Yi Xincheng's letter which Zhang intentionally or unintentionally misquotes. The original reads 'A few thoughts after reading The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions' 读洋泾浜奇侠后的一点感想。

cleverly pokes fun at his critic while reasserting his right to interrupt his narrative to don his mantle of author/narrator and address the reader directly. Leaving aside assessments of Zhang's novel and Zhang's exchange with Yi Xincheng, what is to be found if one turns one's attention to the work itself?

From the outset — a designation that appears after the title states that the novel is written 'for big children' (给大孩子们) — Zhang makes no bones about his intended audience. The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions is of a piece with the earlier 'A Diary of Ghostland' and the subsequent Golden Duck Empire in that all of these long works combine the exaggeration and lightness of approach that is the hallmark of children's fiction whilst making sharp observations about contemporary society that are clearly meant to be appreciated by adult readers. Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726) is a prime example of a novel that can be enjoyed by children and appreciated by adults for its subtlety. Whilst Zhang's works of this type do not measure up to Swift's masterpiece, they nonetheless attempt to realise a similar aim.

The first chapter entitled 'Arriving in Shanghai' 到了上海 opens in a factory in Shenyang at the time of the fall of that city to the Japanese (i.e. 18-19 September 1931). The confused broken ends of conversation between the factory workers are interrupted by author/narrator remarks like:

The world was like a rubber band pulled very taut, so that if someone were to nudge against it, it would snap with a cracking sound.

(世界象一根拉得紧紧的橡皮带, 稍为碰一下, 就得咯一声断了的.)

Gradually the narrator's attention homes in on a group of travellers heading south for Shanghai from Beijing, fleeing the Japanese advance. The narrator is introduced to Shi Zhaochang, his father Shi Boxiang 史伯襄 and Mr. Liu Liu 刘六先生. These travellers exchange 'gongfu' stories during the course of the journey; their talk of heroic deeds seems particularly hollow in the light of their southward flight from Beijing.

As the novel unfolds reader attention is centred on Shi Zhaochang as he passes through his various adventures. Being of a gullible nature and possessing an inheritance of 3000 dollars, Zhaochang is constantly prey to rascals and con-men. He is also the victim of his own romantic longings. His attempts to establish a liaison with a like-minded patriotic lady only land him in trouble. Rather than laboriously recounting the plot let me cite a few examples of Zhaochang's antics.

In Chapter 4, Zhaochang takes some money from the family's cook Xiao Wang and chops him with a knife. When Xiao Wang protests, Zhaochang accuses him of not knowing his position. Later in the same chapter Zhaochang tries on a bathing costume he has bought in which he plans to do daring deeds but unfortunately it is the wrong size and he rips it when he puts it on. Finally, the chapter ends with a line that reinforces the adolescent nature of Zhaochang's fantasy world: 'Once more he dreamed he saw his stepmother taking a bath'. (又梦见继母洗澡.)

In Chapter 8, Zhaochang makes up to the actress Mary He whom he decides he has fallen in love with. Mary for her part kisses Zhaochang full on the lips because from what she has seen in films this is what is expected of her. Zhaochang's gums start to bleed as a result of this kiss and he is left marvelling at Mary's 'gongfu' technique.

In Chapter 13, the rest of Shi Zhaochang's family move to the safety of the French concession, out of fear at the Japanese advance on Shanghai. Zhaochang, however, insists on staying behind and refuses to allow his unwilling acolyte Xiao Wang to seek safety elsewhere.

In Chapter 14, Zhaochang waits in vain for the arrival of his friends and fellow 'gongfu' enthusiasts. Instead the Japanese forces arrive; there is shooting on the streets and planes dropping bombs overhead. Zhaochang is not afraid because he has been kitted out by his Daoist master Taiji zhenren 太极真人 with magic life-saving pills (which are in

fact banana-flavoured sweets) and a penknife. Before he has a chance to do anything heroic the house is hit by a bomb and Zhaochang is wounded. He is taken to hospital where he is once more reunited with his family.

This heavily edited account of Shi Zhaochang's exploits gives only a thin impression of the total picture of Zhaochang that slowly builds up during the course of the novel. Leaving the character-study aspect of the novel aside for the moment, let us consider the subject matter of the novel. There is one main theme that recurs throughout the novel and that is the hollowness of patriotic fervour. To illustrate this theme there is a stream of examples of crackpot methods to help save the country. Mr. Liu Liu, for instance, urges all his friends to join his Fasting to Save the Nation Association and go on a Tagore-like fast in order to help the nation resist the Japanese. By way of explanation he claims that even the English were afraid of Tagore. Another example is an advertisement for thermos flasks that boldly declares: 'Only thermos flasks can save the country!' Mary He acts the part of the 'female knight-errant who will save the nation' 救国女侠 in a stage-play. But Zhaochang himself provides the most glaring example of fanciful patriotism: he believes that he will save the country through a mixture of 'gongfu' and Taoist magic. But he at least stays to face the advancing enemy unlike the rest of his family who flee to the safety of the French concession.

On a technical level, the novel is quite well organised. As in Pulse of the Age the action takes place chronologically between the fall of Shenyang (19. 9. 1931) and the Japanese attack on Shanghai which began on the night of 28 January 1932. It is interesting to note, that the literary 'present' for the narrator and thus the temporal yardstick against which all events in the story are measured is the time of writing/publication. Thus the narrator recalls (a little hazily admittedly) that Shi Zhaochang became acquainted with Hu Genbao 胡根宝 (a Hunanese rascal) in Hankou 汉口 'two, no, three years ago'. (.... 是前年, 不, 大前年, 他大前年在汉口熟认了胡根宝.)

Otherwise, the novel is distinctive for being arranged as a series of episodes with Shi Zhaochang almost invariably the centre of interest. The work therefore corresponds to what would be expected of a picaresque novel like Don Quixote or Voltaire's Candide.

The role of narrator is again worthy of note. As in One Year, The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions has a lively first-person narrator who from time to time addresses the reader directly. The fondness for the formula 'Gentlemen readers' 读者诸君 is more marked in this novel than in the earlier more adult One Year, and more use is made of rhetorical narrator remarks. Consider, for instance, the following two passages which illustrate well the style of narration:

Shi Zhaochang wanted to discuss the study of Daoist magic some more, but his friend kept on asking whether this house had a bathroom or not,

Why did he keep on asking such questions? To make a long story short, they were already in a house, a three-storey building, at a rent of 75 taels. That's right, they moved in five days ago: I'm sorry gentle readers, the matter of their moving in I forgot to "pass on".

(史兆昌想再谈点儿学道术的事,可是大哥老钉着问这幢房子有没有洗澡间,....

老问这些干么呀。总而言之已经住下一幢房子,三层楼,75两。对啦,他们是前五天搬进来的:对不起读者诸君,他们搬家的事可忘了「交代」了。)

Shi Zhaochang sat down on his bed and did not move,

The clock on the table produced a rhythmic sound, letting time pass away second by second.

Can we have him sitting motionless like this for such a time? Could Xiao Wang the cook actually be capable of plotting against him?

If gentle readers you have read some knight-errant adventure fiction, or seen adventure films, then you will know that no matter whether they are Chinese or Western they are all the same, and the knight-errant's fortune is always very good: at the critical moment he will meet a saviour. At this point it is in order for the author to say a word: if you wish to know what happens next in the life of the great knight-errant Shi Zhaochang please listen to the next chapter for an explanation. As a result my gentle readers are very contentedly waiting.

But our great knight-errant is certainly not so relaxed. His legs have gone weak. He is afraid that Xiao Wang is hatching some plot against him. Gentle readers, let us do something to help Shi Zhaochang: let us go to Xiao Wang's room to investigate what he is up to.

(史兆昌坐到床上愣着，……
桌上的钟发出匀称的响声，
让时间一秒钟一秒钟地过去。
老叫他这么愣着么？究竟
厨子小王会不会暗算他？
读者诸君要是读过许多武侠
小说，看过武侠电影片，就知道
无论中国外国都一样，侠客
运气总是挺好的：到紧要关
头就会遇见救星。这里作者可
以说一句：欲知大侠史兆昌性命
如何，且听下回分解。于是读者
诸君很放心地等着。
可是我们的大侠并不这么轻松。
他眼子发软。他怕小王有什么暗算。
读者诸君，咱们还是给史兆昌，代劳
一下吧：到小王房子里去探探动静。)

This latter example, in particular, gives a good impression of Zhang at his most playful in the role of larger-than-life author/narrator. He virtually bullies the reader into accepting his

story on his own terms. The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions is the work of Zhang's with the highest incidence of remarks drawing attention to the narrator that we have come across to date. The abundant use of such remarks is, however, commensurate with the expectations of the work's envisaged audience of 'big children'.

Temporary abandonment of fiction in order to write critical, theoretical and autobiographical essays (February-August 1933)

Between February and August 1933 Zhang wrote and had published a number of critical, theoretical and autobiographical works. The two most lengthy and important of these works were his autobiographical reminiscence 'My youthful existence' 我的幼年生活,¹ of which I have already made extensive use in providing biographical background for Chapter 2, and 'The story of my writing career' 创作的故事,² a deceptively light-hearted attack on various approaches to literary creativity. Zhang recounts his 'The story of my writing career' in a chatty style that owes a great deal to popular fiction. It is worth noting advice given by Zhang to Wang Xiyan³ about writing literary criticism. Zhang advised Wang that he should use a fictional style of penmanship to write theoretical articles in order to make them less dry. Zhang makes free use of embellishment and exaggeration to make what might otherwise be an uninteresting subject more appealing. At one point Zhang describes how he wrote 80,000 words of his leading character's diary, describing in great detail this fellow's morning routine and conduct of his ablutions but without getting any further than breakfast time. His friend, to whom Zhang has shown the manuscript, complains that this punctilious attention to detail

1 Wenxue zazhi 1:2 (15. 5. 1933).

2 This essay appeared in a collection of essays about literary creative experience entitled Chuangzuo de jingyan 《创作的经验》, published by Tianma Bookshop 天马书店 Shanghai in 1935, although it was apparently written in April 1933.

3 Recalled in Wang's recent reminiscence 'Mianlin Sadan de tiaozhan' 面临撒旦的挑战, Furong 1981:3 (9. 1981) 227.

gives him a headache and he has no time for reading such material. Zhang also descends to scatology, a characteristic we have already noted in the story 'After moving House' and of which extensive use is made in the long works 'Great King Baldy' and Golden Duck Empire. In 'The story of my writing career' Zhang's predilection for scatology takes the form of coarse, excremental remarks which were presumably meant to arrest the reader's attention and amuse. The third paragraph goes like this:

I have heard it said that literary creativity needs 'inspiration' or the like. So I did not think of anything, and concentrated all my efforts on waiting for the arrival of that inspiration. I drank a little wine, and I also took along some paper when I went to the outskirts of town, thinking to imitate Beethoven who carried about his person musical composition paper, so that as soon as his humours rose he would immediately be able to write. But after waiting for ages, there was not the slightest sign of inspiration. I had drunk so much wine that my head was spinning, and all I wanted to do was go to bed and sleep. I hadn't written even a single word on the paper I had taken with me to the outskirts of town, but I actually put it to another use: since I have an awkward nature, each time I go to the outskirts of town I always have to have a crap.

In a very few pages Zhang charts the various stages of his early attempts at creative writing. Frequent recourse to exaggeration makes it difficult to distinguish fact from fabrication, thus 'The story of my writing career' does not provide a reliable index of Zhang's creative development during the years 1922-1933. With this proviso, Zhang does however describe various literary experiments that he indulged in and various influences that he absorbed.

Zhang's exposure to influences and experimentation with various styles and fashions can be roughly divided into five stages. First, Zhang came to believe in the existence of inspiration. Secondly, Zhang became influenced by symbolism

or as he jokingly describes it, "that school of literature that uses incomprehensible language" ('那说话叫人听不懂的一派'). In pursuing symbolism his avowed objective was to escape the confusion of his age and inhabit an ivory tower. Thirdly, he affected self-adulation, a fad which he asserts was popular amongst post-May 4th writers, and which was exemplified in the works of a Western poet (not specified). In Zhang's fourth stage, Zhang having found that the cost of an ivory tower was prohibitive (at this point he becomes less than serious) had lowered his expectations and set his sights on an ox-bone tower instead. Unable to ignore events in the world around him, and here Zhang becomes specific in mentioning the May 30th incident 五卅惨案 (30. 5. 1925) and the March 18th incident 三·一八惨案 (18. 3. 1926), Zhang no longer found it possible to occupy his ox-bone tower and came out into the real world for the first time. In the fifth stage of his development, Zhang threw caution to the winds, ignoring rules and conventions, and simply wrote in the style of the books he liked to read. His first experiment in free-ranging writing resulted in a piece of prose cluttered with strange plant-names and lengthy descriptive passages. Receiving a thumbs-down from the friend to whom he showed it, Zhang tried again but his second attempt too was a failure, engendering gut ache in his friend because of its preoccupation with striving after artistic worth. Seeming to have learnt his lesson Zhang started to note down what he heard people say, and to notice their gestures and facial expressions. Unfortunately his third attempt paid excessive attention to trivia and thus the 80,000 word pre-breakfast diary entry that was the result proved to be a failure too. Zhang concludes by claiming that he is still studying and experimenting.

Two aspects of 'The story of my writing career' that are worthy of special attention are Zhang's claim at the end of the work that "This story is of course true" and the use Zhang makes of contrasting clearly personal experience with barefaced exaggeration. That Zhang goes to the trouble of asserting the authenticity of his story immediately calls its face-value credibility into question. The contrast between personal

experience and out-and-out exaggeration is at times a disconcerting aspect of Zhang's jocular style.

Apart from 'My youthful existence' and 'The story of my writing career', Zhang also wrote 'An introduction to "Bees"' 《蜜蜂》自题,¹ 'The writer popped up in midstream' 作者从半腰里跳了出来,² 'Concerning "My youthful existence"' 关于“我的幼年生活”³ and 'Post-impressionist painting in China' 后期印象派绘画在中国⁴ during the period February to August 1933.

In 'An introduction to "Bees"' Zhang acknowledged his debt to "his little friends" (那些小朋友) for had it not been for his contact with children he could not have written the story 'Bees', since the story relates events of the adult world through the eyes of a child. Zhang goes on to allude to the contributions made by various adult friends in criticising and discussing his works. He rather jocularly refers to his various critics as 'My friend' 『我的朋友』 without naming names. He dismisses the criticisms of one 'friend' who favours French style criticism. 'A certain Mr. "My friend" who has never written half a page of literary criticism in his life' appears to have got Zhang's goat. The gentleman in question had criticised Zhang's stories, simply on the ground that this story 'works' 『行』 or that story 'doesn't work' 『不行』 without giving any reasons. Zhang's frustration at not being given reasons as to why some of his stories succeed for his 'friend' and some do not is understandable, but this does not necessarily make his friend's cumulative judgement invalid as Zhang would have us believe. Zhang recoils at the thought of his friend's figurative critical hoop 圈子 in which Zhang's story is placed: if it fits the hoop then it 'works' and if not then it 'doesn't work'. Zhang seems to have missed the point that after reading to the end of a short story, the reader takes cumulative stock of his reactions to the story,

1 Bees 《蜜蜂》 was a collection of Zhang's stories published by Xiandai Book Company 现代书局 (15. 5. 1933).

2 Xiandai 3:3 (1. 7. 1933) 435.

3 Wenxue zazhi 1:3, 4 (31. 7. 1933) 203, 204.

4 Xiandai 3:4 (1. 8. 1933) 438-9.

and at this point the reader is in a position to express overall satisfaction or overall dissatisfaction with the story or as Zhang's "my friend" put it the story 'works' or 'doesn't work'.

'The writer popped up in midstream' is Zhang's response to a letter in Xiandai magazine from a reader criticising his The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions. As this exchange deals primarily with the work in question it has already been considered as part of the discussion of The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions.¹

'Concerning "My youthful existence"' is a nettled letter addressed to the editor of Wenxue zazhi pointing out that an inappropriate editorial note had mistakenly been appended to Zhang's autobiographical reminiscence in the preceding edition of the magazine.

'Post-impressionist painting in China' is a jocular assessment of Chinese reactions to Western post-impressionist painting. Zhang characterises the contemporary enthusiasm for post-impressionist painting as an example of 'gigolo culture' (小白脸文化.) Continuing with his mocking tone, Zhang scorns current fondness for anything produced by 'foreign devils' 洋鬼子, and explains Chinese absorption of post-impressionist art in the following terms:

"Since Chinese people wish to shake off the fetters of splayfooted culture [i.e. the culture of the scholar-gentry who walk with a pompous gait], and sing in praise of a kind of modern 'gigolo' culture that has been learned from the foreign devils, and sing of individuality, of course this type of art has been readily accepted"

(中国人既想脱开...八字脚文化的束缚,而唱一种从洋鬼子那儿学来的摩登的小白脸文化,唱个人主义,当然很容易地就接受了这种艺术。)

¹ See above pp. 181-190.

In order to drive home his satirical point Zhang takes a precept of the culture that gave rise to post-impressionist painting and carries it to its logical conclusion. He seizes on the idea that post-impressionist paintings are self-revelations of the artists who paint them:

It does not matter at all what you paint, because what you express is yourself. If you paint a cockscomb, then you are using a cockscomb to express yourself: if you paint a woman with a naked posterior, then you are using a woman's naked posterior to express yourself

(你在画什么都没有关系, 因为表现的是你自己。你画鸡冠花, 就是借鸡冠花表现你自己, 你画光屁股女人, 就是借光屁股女人表现你自己)

Zhang's satirical style in 'Post-impressionist painting in China' is of a piece with the style he used to write 'The story of my writing career'. Having adopted this style, Zhang continued to use it for works of criticism varying only the frequency and degree of risqué remarks, up until the autumn of 1942 when he was forced to stop writing because of acute illness. Zhang's long literary critical discourse on characterisation in fiction-writing 'The Description of Characters' 《谈人物描写》¹ was also written in Zhang's adopted style, but already in more serious works such as 'About material "irrelevant" to the War of Resistance' 论“无关”抗战的题材² and 'Concerning ethnic forms of literature' 关于文艺的民族形式³ the old style had all but disappeared and been replaced by the more staid and conventional approach that was to characterise Zhang's post-1949 literary critical works.

Down and out in the countryside: 'A Common Occurrence' and 'Honeymoon Life'.

1 Serialised in Kangzhan wenyi between November, 1941 and June, 1942.

2 Wenxue yuebao 1:6 (15. 6. 1940).

3 Xiandai wenyi 2:1 (25. 10. 1940) 2:2 (25. 11. 1940).

Continuing to explore the despair of the underprivileged members of society that Zhang had already started to take an interest in in his earlier works 'After moving House' and 'A Prosperous Year', Zhang went on to produce two stories about this time that are in similar vein: 'A Common Occurrence' 一件尋常事¹ and 'Honeymoon Life' 蜜月生活.² Where they differ from Zhang's earlier treatments of underprivileged members of society is in their settings. 'After moving House' and 'A Prosperous Year' both have urban settings; Shanghai in the case of the latter. 'A Common Occurrence' is set against a semi-rural background whilst 'Honeymoon Life' takes place in a sparsely populated suburban area.

Like 'A Prosperous Year', both 'A Common Occurrence' and 'Honeymoon Life' deal with underprivileged people driven to desperate lengths. In 'A Common Occurrence' — the title is sardonic — a family reduced to penury make vain attempts to improve their lot. The family comprises Lao san 老三, his wife Didi 弟弟 and their young son A Quan 阿全. Throughout the course of the story, the wife lies ailing on her sickbed in a shack (which is their home) that is lashed by heavy rain. From time to time she coughs up blood, and is weak from lack of nutrition and lack of medical attention. Lao san is out of work and has turned to drink because of his despair at failing to find employment. On returning home from a drinking bout, Lao san beats up his sick wife and shouts abuse at his son. Lao san's wife accepts her husband's behaviour as only natural, for she feels that she is a burden to him, preventing him from going elsewhere to seek employment. The son A Quan has ambivalent feelings towards his father because of what his father does to his mother when he is drunk.

Uncle Yonglin 永林伯伯, an ineffectual friend of the family, persuades Lao san of the necessity to raise some money in order to pay school fees for A Quan so that he can send him away. Uncle Yonglin is instrumental in persuading

¹ Wenxue 1:1 (1. 7. 1933).

² Shenghuo zhoukan 8:36 (9. 9. 1933), 8:37 (16. 9. 1933).

Lao san to poison his wife so that he can be rid of the responsibility of caring for her and subsequently free to move about and seek employment elsewhere.

Lao san manages to raise enough money to send A Quan away to school and also buy some poison. The story ends with a sad, tearful parting between father and son after Lao san has poisoned his wife.

The story movingly describes the plight of poverty-stricken people and shows to what lengths they can be driven by adverse circumstances. The story is presented in such a way that exceptionally distressing events appear as banal, everyday occurrences. That this was the authorial intention is borne out by the title 'A Common Occurrence'.

Another distinctive aspect of 'A Common Occurrence' is the use made of shifts in the narrative viewpoint. The story is told through the eyes of a third-person narrator, but on several occasions the narrator takes up the standpoint of the child A Quan. At these points in the story the narrator adopts A Quan's stance by referring to Lao san and Didi as Daddy 爸爸 and Mummy 妈妈. This reinforces the adoption of a child's stance and helps to obscure the unlikeliness of some of A Quan's insights into the problems that the family face which betray adult feelings and knowledge. At one point in the story, the narrator even goes so far as to report on what is going on in the mind of A Quan:

A Quan was imagining his father going along the road: his whole body soaked with rain, with steam issuing from his hair. He would also have some things tucked under his arm — but A Quan could not think what those things might be, but in any case they would be very important things, things which once home, would make it as if every problem could be solved, as if everything would get better.

(阿全想象着爸爸走在路上：一身
的雨，头发里冒着热气。他还挟
着些东西——阿全可想不出那是
些什么，总而言之那是挺要紧的

东西,那些东西一到家,彷彿什么都
都有了办法,什么都得好起来。)

The shifts in narrative viewpoint together with the highly repetitive nature of the story — the constant rain and the recurrent bouts of drinking and wife-battering by Lao san are often referred to, thus helping to create a cumulatively oppressive effect — suggest that the point of the story was more important than the means used to achieve it. Every opportunity to make the story appear as heart-rending as possible is enthusiastically seized upon. Even Lao san whose behaviour towards his wife and son is inexcusable is permitted a moving description of his despair:

".... I can't find a job. Everyone will soon starve to death No matter which way I turn, I still feel absolutely stuck. I'm always wanting to drink, it's as though unless I drink I'll go mad. I'm always thinking of killing people There's nothing to be done. I won't be able to find a job: all I hear about is companies stopping trading, the closing down of factories, and no vacancies"

(「....我找不着工作。大家马上得
饿死.....不知道怎么办心里老是
怪整的。我老是要喝酒,不喝就得
疯似的。我老是想杀人.....没点
法子。找不到工做:只听说歇生
意,倒工厂,没招工的.....」)

This sympathetic treatment of Lao san has a dual effect: it increases the heart-rending quotient of the story as a whole; and it makes the reader's attitude towards Lao san more sympathetic.

'Honeymoon Life' also describes characters who are living below the bread-line, but unlike 'A Common Occurrence' this story achieves its main effect by contrasting the life of those who live in burial burrows with those who live within the comfortable security of a western style house. 'A Common Occurrence' concentrates on piling on the agony until it reaches the limit of human endurance; there is no offer of relief. 'Honeymoon Life' on the other hand tempers the agonies of poverty with poignant contrasts.

The story opens with a young man Xiao Jiao 小焦 and a young woman Ruyi 如意 discussing in grand terms what they plan to eat that day. Finally they both burst into laughter and the narrator explains how Xiao Jiao and Ruyi came to be 'bridegroom' and 'bride'. The two came to share a hole in a burial mound because Ruyi sought sanctuary in Xiao Jiao's hole one rainy night when her own hole became water-logged. The young couple who are in their teens are congratulated on their liaison by others living in nearby burial holes. Then they are left to enjoy their 'honeymoon'.

In stark contrast to these lowest depths is a nearby house where a rich family lives. On the third morning after their 'marriage' Xiao Jiao goes to beg food from the kitchen of the rich household. Just at this moment, the young man who lives in the house is throwing biscuits from the verandah to his dog Bingbing 兵兵 below. Xiao Jiao intercepts one of the biscuits and he is bitten by the little dog. This prompts the young man of the house to create a cruel, degrading game for Xiao Jiao to play with the dog. If Xiao Jiao can intercept ten out of twenty dog-biscuits, the young man will reward him with 20 cents. This game gives the young man and his friends watching on the verandah a great deal of amusement. By the time Xiao Jiao has caught three biscuits to the dog's five he is too exhausted to run and is bleeding where the dog has bitten him. Giving up, Xiao Jiao hurries off to give the biscuits to Ruyi. Subsequently Xiao Jiao sneaks into the garden of the rich household one dark night with the intention of picking some maize that is growing there. Bingbing starts barking and Xiao Jiao is forced to beat a hasty retreat.

Another hole-dweller A Xiang 阿祥 on learning of Xiao Jiao's failure to obtain food declares he will do for the dog. Three days later Bingbing is discovered lying dead in the kitchen doorway of the rich household. When the dog is buried, the hole dwellers notice that the dog has been buried with his expensive-looking metal collar still round his neck. They resolve to dig it up and steal it one dark night. When they dig up the grave they have trouble opening the box that contains Bingbing's

remains because it has been nailed down tight. Making a noise they are caught in the act. Thus the story ends.

The presence of a dog in this story together with its untimely end call to mind the earlier story about a pampered dog 'Little Peter'.¹ In 'Little Peter' factory workers kill, albeit accidentally, the boss's little dog after sadistically taunting it for some time. In 'Honeymoon Life' A Xiang who presumably poisons Bingbing does so in order to avenge Xiao Jiao who failed to steal food from the rich household's garden when the dog barked, but also to some extent perhaps he does this because of what the dog stands for in a hungry world. Bingbing is a well-fed pet in a world where poor people are suffering from hunger. By conceiving his game of throwing biscuits to Xiao Jiao and Bingbing, the young man of the rich household shows that he has only as much or not even as much respect for Xiao Jiao as he does for his dog. The point that in a topsy-turvy world dogs can be valued more highly than humans is made only passingly in 'A Diary of Ghostland' and 'Little Peter' but is driven firmly home in 'Honeymoon Life'. Zhang was not the only writer of this period to be aware of and draw attention to the disparity of treatment towards dogs and humans that existed in 1930s China. Ba Jin in his story entitled 'Dog' 狗,² also drew attention to the disparity by writing about a destitute street urchin who envies the pets of rich foreign women so much that he even tries to become one. When he throws himself impulsively at the ankles of a lady walking her dog he meets with an unexpected reception.

In form, 'Honeymoon Life' is reminiscent of 'Lackadaisical Love Story' in that the story is divided into six titled and numbered sections with less than serious titles such as 'Bridegroom and bride' 新郎和新娘, 'Bridal chamber' 洞房, 'Gifts of the honoured guests' 来宾的礼物 and 'Necklace' 项链. Exaggeration is used for comic and satiric effect; thus a grimy, damp burial hole becomes a

1 See above pp. 100-104.

2 This story first appeared in Ba Jin's collection of stories Guangming 《光明》 in 1931. A revised edition of the story appeared in 1935.

'bridal chamber' and a dog collar becomes a 'necklace'. The narrator, whilst less ostentatious than the narrator to be found in 'Lackadaisical Love Story' does, however, assert his presence from time to time by addressing rhetorical questions to the reader such as: 'How did these two get together?' (他们俩怎么结合起来的?)

The graphic description of human misery has its precursor in the story 'Hate' with its description of a maggot-infested wound. The 'Honeymoon Life' equivalent is tempered with rare good humour which helps to create an impression of spiritedness in adversity:

A worm crawled out of the soil and crawled back in again: its tail was left dangling outside. A little ant bumped into the tail, and that worm wriggled for all it was worth. Ruyi who was watching laughed.

(一条蚯蚓爬出土来又爬进土里去:尾巴留在外面。小蚂蚁在那尾巴上碰了一下,那蚯蚓就没命地一陈子扭。如意瞧着笑了一笑。)

The most significant aspect of 'Honeymoon Life' and what distinguishes it most from 'A Common Occurrence' is its treatment of class division and conflict. In 'Little Peter' the factory workers were divided from their boss by differences in life style and in values. In 'Honeymoon Life' the contrast between the life of the hole-dwellers and the life of the rich household nearby is more marked, and the author/narrator makes more of the differences, than in 'Little Peter'. Starting with 'Little Peter' and 'After moving House', Zhang became increasingly concerned with social iniquities that were the result of class divisions and differences. Contrasts in class and wealth received their most clear-cut and didactic treatment in the children's story 'Big Lin and Little Lin', and it is in Zhang's subsequent examples of children's fiction, 'A Strange Place' 奇怪的地方 and Golden Duck Empire, that such contrasts are most unambiguously described. Zhang's adult fiction, and 'Honeymoon Life' is a good example, tends to present class divisions and the morality of social iniquity as a complex

matter. At the end of 'Honeymoon Life' the hole-dwellers are caught in the act of trying to rob Bingbing's grave and are presumably taken off to the local police station to be charged. Thus with the exception of Xiao Jiao's interception of three dog-biscuits, all attempts to beg food or steal things from the wealthy household result in failure.

'Honeymoon Life' is also a good example of Zhang's mature, sophisticated style of short story writing; he feels no necessity to explain how the tomb-dwellers came to be where they are, for instance, simply presenting the situation as it is.

Scenes of conflict induced by poverty.

Zhang's next three stories all deal with scenes of conflict brought about by poverty, and continue to explore the theme that Zhang dealt with in previous stories such as 'A Prosperous Year', 'A Common Occurrence' and 'Honeymoon Life'. Tales of harshness and despair were commonplace in 1930s China, but Zhang's stories avoid submersion in generalised pity and distress and concentrate instead on the aspects of each story which make that story unique. Often this uniqueness lies not in the events or characters described but in the realism of the story's setting: it is the description of life in a burial mound that makes 'Honeymoon Life' memorable and we shall find that Zhang's increasingly sure-handed capture of ambience makes his stories of the mid-1930s appear particularly convincing.

The first of the three stories 'Tips' 小帐¹ describes the unenviable existence of three apprentices working as trainee cooks in a grubby small town restaurant. Their labour is exploited by the owner of the restaurant who pays them an apology for a wage whilst they learn their trade. They are required to work inhumanly long hours and suffer the curses of the owner and his wife.

¹ Shenghuo zhoukan 8:38 (23. 9. 1933), 8:39 (30. 9. 1933), 8:40 (7. 10. 1933), 8:41 (14. 10. 1933).

A third-person narrator presents a two-day long slice of the life of the three apprentices. Tension builds up as the apprentices desperately await the sharing out of the tips, for their wages are not enough to enable them to buy new shoes when their old ones wear out. Finally Xiao Fuzi 小福子, the youngest of the three apprentices, loses patience when the boss demands the tip that had been specially given to the three apprentices by one of the customers. Xiao Fuzi runs away from the restaurant and returns to his home. There he finds his family in even poorer circumstances than when he last saw them. Ironically they are placing their hopes in Xiao Fuzi, praying that one day he will have his own restaurant and be able to support them. Finding himself caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, Xiao Fuzi meekly returns to his place of employment and the story ends.

The story is cleverly constructed to optimise its effect. Much of the early part of the story is taken up with scene-setting. A picture of the unpleasant working conditions of the apprentices is relentlessly built up: the weather is very hot and the apprentices are constantly sweating; Xiao Fuzi has to rise early to learn how to clean ducks; none of the apprentices get to bed before one or two in the morning.

As in the story 'A Common Occurrence', descriptions of mounting tension, monotony and claustrophobia do nothing to further the plot but are used instead to convey a total picture by assembling selected typical examples; a typical part stands for the equally typical whole.

The subtlety of the story lies in Xiao Fuzi's discovery that his family have pinned their hopes on him and his consequent realisation that, though he finds his existence as an apprentice at the restaurant unbearable, he must stick at it for the sake of his parents. Xiao Fuzi's moment of perspicacity also marks a moment of realisation on the part of the reader and turns an otherwise straightforward tale into a complex story.

Zhang's next story 'Family Reunion' 团圆¹ deals with a domestic crisis that has its roots in poverty. Like 'A Common Occurrence' and 'Honeymoon Life', this story explores the extremes to which poor people are driven by impoverished circumstances.

The father of the family leaves home in order to search for gainful employment and does not return home for more than a year. In his absence, his wife, unable to make ends meet, turns to prostitution in order to support herself and her five children.²

The story deals with the return home of the father, his discovery of his wife's infidelities in his absence, and the conflict amongst the family members that results.

An oblique narrative technique is used to tell the story. Rather than describing at the outset a violent quarrel between husband and wife, the return of the husband is at first seen from the point of view of their children and the reader thus comes to realise the effect it has on them. Their mother's prostitution is common knowledge amongst other children in the neighbourhood and the children are teased mercilessly as a consequence. Hearing gossip about his wife, the father confronts his wife with the accusation that she has been unfaithful in his absence. A bitter argument ensues, during the course of which there are mutual recriminations.

Eventually the mother snaps and runs out of the house and her husband runs after her. The insight into the husband's mind revealed by the omniscient narrator shows that the husband recognises his fault:

He must at all costs catch up with her. He must at all costs get her to go back home. He must at all costs kneel before her — and tell her not to take any notice of him: for more than a year he had been bringing her grief. And he must at all costs

¹ Xiandai 4:1 (11. 1933).

² This scenario of a husband leaving his wife and family behind and going off in search of work recurs often in Zhang's works, e.g. Bai Muyi in the novel One Year.

Finally the narrator draws a veil over the story and allows the reader the freedom to imagine what happens next: "The confused footsteps sounded as though they were speeding up."

'Family Reunion' presents the problems of the family from every viewpoint. Dagen 大根, the eldest son, fights with a classmate who insults his mother's virtue. The father is at first furious with his wife, but we learn from the narrator that his fury quickly gives way to remorse when his wife runs out of the house. The mother, for her part, tells her neighbour that she feels she has let her husband down in his absence. The reader, thanks to the narrator, is privy to the feelings of all the participants in the domestic drama. It is only when the narrator oversteps the mark, as when he introduces unnecessary comment such as the information that two of Dagen's classmates are rotters (这两个是坏蛋。), that the story's otherwise compelling quality is marred.

'Retribution' 报应¹ also describes poor people in desperate straits. The central character, a peasant farmer called Taiyi 泰一, is deep in debt and having great difficulty supporting his pregnant wife and son. Taiyi is under an obligation to give a tithe payment of grain to the head of the local Buddhist monastery. The story, which is divided into six sections, begins by describing a meeting between Taiyi and the head of the monastery 老师傅. Taiyi asks for a reduction in the tithe he must give or at least more time to pay, but he meets with a frosty response. The second section switches to Taiyi's home and the tension building up there. Another peasant farmer, Zhang wuhengzi 张五横子, advocates not giving in to the pressures of the landlord but it is not in Taiyi's nature to heed such advice. In the third section Taiyi reaches an agreement with the head of the monastery. Taiyi goes further into debt by borrowing money from the head of the monastery in order to fulfil the tithe obligation. This stop-gap measure does nothing to solve Taiyi's fundamental problem; he is still desperately poor. When Taiyi is driven out of his home by his angry wife, he once more goes frustratedly and uncertainly to

¹ Wenxue 2:2 (1. 2. 1934).

the home of the head of the monastery. Finding no one there Taiyi decides to wait. At the end of his tether and very ill at ease he suddenly discovers that what he took to be a snake is in fact a piece of rope. He makes a noose and hangs himself. In the fifth section Taiyi is discovered and cut down. When he returns to consciousness he is beaten, and reproached for his action by the head of the monastery. As Taiyi leaves the monastery, he bumps into a group of villagers, amongst whom he recognises Zhang wuhengzi. Frightened and in pain after his beating, Taiyi hurries home. In the sixth and final section, the action shifts to the following morning and the news is that a band of brigands entered the monastery during the night and seriously injured the head of the monastery. After a while Taiyi is arrested, presumably because he has been implicated in the affair.

The story is unusual for its twists; Taiyi's sudden resolution to hang himself as if prompted by auto-suggestion and his arrest at the end of the story are examples of unexpected turns in the plot.

Taiyi does not come across as a strong character — he lacks the resolve and leadership qualities of Zhang wuhengzi for instance — but the impression of an unexceptional man oppressed by difficulties on every side comes across clearly. Taiyi is caught hopelessly between the rival pressures of his unsympathetic landlord and his pregnant wife.

All three of the stories described above show the effects of poverty. In each case the basic premise is the same: shortage of funds leads inevitably to exploitation and despair.

We have already seen that many of Zhang's works in 1933 — both novels and stories — dealt with the question of patriotism. We shall find that his late 1933 and 1934 works — and the three stories discussed above are representative — deal increasingly with social iniquity. Whereas earlier works such as 'Little Peter' and 'After moving House' only touch upon this theme, Zhang's 1934 works deal mainly or exclusively with this theme.

Another characteristic of the three stories discussed above is the exclusive use made of the third person narrative method. Zhang seems to have consciously started from the end of 1933 onwards to shun the first person narrator of which he had made such notable use earlier in his literary career. The highly personalised and demonstrative first person narrative method gave Zhang the freedom to indulge his fondness for flamboyant raconteurship. As his literary technique became more mature and his didactic purpose more serious, his use of the first person narrative method decreased accordingly.

Zhang's flirting with drama: 'Hero of the Age' and 'The Old and the Young are without Deceit'.

Zhang published only two plays for adults and they appeared within a couple of months of each other in early 1934.¹ Zhang's writing of two one-act plays at this time must be seen as an experiment with a new form. The fact that Zhang abandoned the form after only two attempts and without trying to write a three or five-act play suggests that the experiment was a failure.

The first of the two plays, 'Hero of the Age' 时代的英雄² satirises the empty patriotism of the leisured classes. Xin Shuliang 辛叔良, the son of a wealthy capitalist is engaged to marry his girlfriend Xu Hui 许慧. Shuliang's father has promised to give his son 50,000 dollars as a wedding gift. Shuliang discusses with his friend Lao Luo 老罗 how

1 Both Shen Chengkuan and Tsau Shu-ying refer to a play that Zhang wrote in co-operation with Ai Wu and Sha Ting entitled 'The Romance of Marco Polo Bridge' 芦沟桥演义. The play has not as yet been discovered in any periodicals of the day; it was presumably written some time after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 7 July, 1937. Zhang's contribution to the endeavour may not have been very great. After the Communist take-over in 1949, Zhang wrote two plays for children 'Rongsheng at Home' 蓉生在家里 (Renmin wenxue 3 (3. 1953)) and 'Big Grey Wolf' 大灰狼 (Renmin wenxue 7-8 (7. 8. 1953)) but these two works fit more suitably into the category of 'Children's literature' and cannot usefully be compared with Zhang's 1934 plays.

2 Zhongguo wenxue 1:1 (1. 2. 1934).

best to spend his father's wedding present. He also waxes lyrical about his fiancée's naivety, chastity and lack of interest in material things. Lao Luo sounds a cautionary note but Shuliang will not listen to his friend. A crisis develops when a telephone call comes to say that Shuliang's father's business has been destroyed by the advancing Japanese. This news sets off a chain reaction: Xu Hui says she wants to break off the engagement; Shuliang says he is going to pack up and go to fight the Japanese. The crisis is only averted when Wu Xingwu 吴 星 五, a friend of the family, tells Xu Hui that Shuliang's family still have property and money in the south. Once more enamoured of Shuliang, Xu Hui joins with Wu Xingwu and Lao Luo in trying to persuade Shuliang not to go away to take part in the war, but rather to stay at home and be a 'hero of the age' by playing golf and drinking whisky and champagne. He is persuaded without much difficulty.

The characters are deliberately exaggerated caricatures and resemble most closely the characters to be found in Zhang's earlier lighthearted story 'Lackadaisical Love Story'. Xu Hui, Shuliang and Wu Xingwu all have an immodest view of their own self importance. Consider, for example, Xu Hui's 'vision of reality':

".... we are the masters of this age, don't you think? God made those people to do things for us, to let us live very comfortably. Hm, God really loves us!"

And Wu Xingwu has a similarly elitist view of society:

".... we are the centre of humanity, around us are numerous people to serve us, eh? They naturally must avenge you, we need not concern ourselves. We can go with peace of mind to play golf and drink whisky."

These members of society's upper crust combine complacency with hypocrisy.

Only one of the characters in the play is endearing and that is San Wazi 三 控 子, Shuliang's valet.¹ He comes on

¹ A servant of the same name is valet to Romeo in 'Lackadaisical Love Story'.

stage humming Peking opera tunes and mimicking the actions of an opera star. He has the engaging habit of listening at keyholes which enables him to interrupt Shuliang and Xu Hui just when they are about to kiss. He is overjoyed when Shuliang orders him to get ready to go and join up and greets the news that they will not after all be going to fight the Japanese with incomprehension.

'The Old and the Young are without Deceit' ¹ ^{老少无欺} is a comical appraisal of contemporary morality and like the previous play draws attention to an example of hypocrisy. This time sexual politics replaces patriotism as the abstract backcloth to the play.

The main plot describes how a mother, Gu taitai ^{太太} and her daughter San xiaojie ^{三小姐} attempt to inveigle a young man (Xiao Chen ^{小陈}) into marrying San xiaojie. Their plan backfires when Xiao Chen reveals that his family cannot afford the 200 dollars per month payment to Gu taitai that is a precondition for a marriage contract. The play has a subplot which concerns Chuntao ^{春桃} the daughter of Zhu Changfu ^{朱长福}, in return for money with which to help her ailing father. In a display of high morality and outraged disgust, Gu taitai and San xiaojie browbeat Chuntao and send her packing. Towards the end of the play Chuntao's boyfriend Zhu Changfu arrives on the scene and politely and patiently pleads Chuntao's case. When it becomes apparent that Zhu Changfu spends the magic sum of 200 dollars per month on Chuntao, Gu taitai and San xiaojie change their tune and try to make up to Zhu Changfu, even going so far as to suggest that he should marry San xiaojie. He is horrified by the suggestion and explains that he has no intention of getting married, for he is already obligated to several women, and could not bring himself to limit himself to just one woman. The play ends inconclusively with San xiaojie ranting against Chuntao and blaming her for her own failure to make a match. It is unclear what will happen next, whether San xiaojie will take her mother's advice and become one of Zhu Changfu's paid lovers, or whether

1 Chun guang 1:2 (1. 4. 1934).

Chuntao will be allowed to keep her job.

The play is less satisfying than its predecessor 'Hero of the Age' since the stereotyped characters are more tiresome. San xiaojie, for instance, to show her annoyance repeats herself endlessly like a badly scratched record. The play also lacks a humorous character of the quality of San wazi. Xiao Chen who fulfils a similar dramatic function, is but a pale shadow of San wazi, tiresomely shrugging his shoulders every time he is asked a question. 'The Old and the Young are without Deceit' is technically inferior to 'Hero of the Age' and although it was published after 'Hero of the Age' all the signs are that it predates it.

'The Old and the Young are without Deceit' highlights the unrepentant hypocrisy of Gu taitai and her daughter. As though to reinforce her hollowness Gu taitai is portrayed as a maladroit user of 'vogue' words:

"You are very clever, you really know what you are after, you really have a political plan, you really can't be humoured, don't you agree"

("你是挺聪明的,挺有目的,挺有政策,你可幽默不了,你说是不是....")

Gu taitai and San xiaojie are shown to be shallow and scheming, but in the end their scheming gets them nowhere.

'Hero of the Age' and 'The Old and the Young are without Deceit' bear certain stylistic similarities. Both plays are relatively short, concentrated one-act plays and each play has a cast of only five characters. Both plays are comedies and though they use different subjects and targets they are both equally didactic. Zhang's brief, fleeting experimentation with drama suggests temporary dissatisfaction with the short story genre or at least a need to try some other form of literature, but the swift return to full-scale short story production shows that these two plays are not in the mainstream of Zhang's literary creative development.

Like Zhang's children's fiction, both before and after 1949, these two plays can be regarded as peripheral to his main development as a writer of fiction. The plays and the children's fiction enabled Zhang to use media that allowed more freedom than the short story and these works thus contain blunter, less sophisticated exposures of contemporary society's ills than are to be found in the short stories.

Infant mortality: two sides of the same coin explored.

Shortly after his experiment with play-writing Zhang published two short stories within a short space of time, both of them dealing with the death of young children. 'A Couple of Chums' 朋友俩¹ describes the death of a sickly child of rich parents. 'Strange Meeting' 奇遇² deals with the death through starvation of a child whose 妻² dealt her suckled the child of rich parents to earn money, thus forsaking her own child, whilst her husband spent her earnings on drinking and gambling.

Whilst both stories describe a similar event — the death of an infant — they differ in several important ways. Qiqi 期期, the 7 year old boy who becomes seriously ill in 'A Couple of Chums' is the child of wealthy parents, whereas Xiao lianer 小连儿 in 'Strange Meeting' is the son of a family struggling to make ends meet. No matter how much money Qiqi's parents spend on employing expensive doctors (they even pay a German doctor to look at the child) it is all to no avail; Xiao lianer's parents do not have even enough money to pay for the most cheapskate doctor to treat their child. Qiqi's illness seems to be the outcome of excessive molly coddling whereas Xiao lianer becomes sick as the result of neglect. In 'A Couple of Chums' there is no domestic conflict between Qiqi's parents; they simply share their sorrow. In 'Strange Meeting', however, domestic conflict and mutual recrimination are to the fore.

The similarities between the two stories are also marked. They achieve their effect by using the same method: contrast.

1 Liangyou 86 (15. 3. 1934).

2 Wenxue jikan 1:2 (1. 4. 1934).

In 'A Couple of Chums' Qiqi grows ever more ill whilst his friend Xiao pangzi 小胖 子 remains tubby and healthy^{ly} no matter what unhealthy activities he engages in. (Xiao pangzi catches a chill after rolling in the snow, but having suffered a day's discomfoting diarrhoea, he is then as right as rain once more.) In 'Strange Meeting' the mother of Xiao lianer takes the child she has been suckling with her when she goes to visit her dying son. The contrast between the healthy girl Yuzi 豫 子 and the ailing Xiao lianer could not be more marked. Both stories are seen mainly from a child's point of view. In 'A Couple of Chums', the narrator shows a close understanding of the thoughts and feelings of both Qiqi and Xiao pangzi. In 'Strange Meeting', the action, dialogue, description of the scene and behaviour of the participants in the action are almost exclusively viewed through the eyes of Yuzi. By writing 'Strange Meeting' almost exclusively from Yuzi's point of view, Zhang was attempting something considerably difficult: an exercise in consistency of the same order as that to be found in the earlier story 'Bees'. Whilst these stories possess the charm and appeal of a child's eye-view on the world they are also constantly in danger of exhibiting some unchildlike adult insight which would destroy at a stroke the fragile illusion that has painstakingly been built up. 'Strange Meeting' comes perilously close to destroying this illusion in some of its descriptions which display excessive sophistication and are unexpectedly well-ordered, but in the main the picture of a child's world is studiously sustained. The frustration and discomfort felt by Yuzi when she fails to draw attention to her need to urinate and can no longer contain herself is most compelling. Yuzi's incomprehension when the person she is accustomed to call mother (i.e. her wetnurse) pleads with a yellowing bundle of bones to address her as mother is also presented with great skill, as is her distaste for the kisses that relatives and her parents' friends shower upon her.

A contemporary review of 'Strange Meeting' by Mao Dun,¹ whilst careful to point out the good points of the story was

¹ Wenxue 3:1 (1. 7. 1934); also to be found in a recent collection of Mao Dun's critical writings 《茅盾论创作》，Shanghai wenyi Publishing House, (5. 1980) 294-295.

also sharply critical of it, concluding by noticing "a recent tendency in Zhang's works to move 'from fullness to emptiness', which is a great pity." Mao Dun correctly notes a generic similarity between 'Strange Meeting' and Zhang's earlier stories 'After moving House' (Mao Dun claims to have forgotten the title), 'Bees', and 'A Common Occurrence'. According to Mao Dun, Zhang "was the earliest of Chinese writers to experiment with this kind of material and the only person to be successful at it. In particular this story 'Strange Meeting', from a technical point of view, is a completely faultless work."

Mao Dun goes on, however, to take Zhang to task for his choice of subject matter. He points out that the 'wetnurse question' is a thorny problem and literary attempts to deal effectively with the problem are always in danger of sinking into the mire of humanitarianism. Though admitting that Zhang avoids the humanitarian trap, Mao Dun is concerned that the story misfires because the presentation of adult problems from the viewpoint of a child will only make readers laugh. "As a result, this story 'Strange Meeting' becomes simply 'a curious work' that hides hollow content beneath a loose, novel outer garment."

The most interesting thing that is revealed by comparing these two stories, 'A Couple of Chums' and 'Strange Meeting', is the technical skill with which Zhang manipulates similar material to produce two stories that are each distinctive in their own way. The technical perfection noted by Mao Dun in the case of 'Strange Meeting' does distinguish it from the earlier 'A Couple of Chums' and 'After moving House', marking it out as an example of Zhang's mature and perfected craftsmanship. Mao Dun also noted the story's shortness; it runs to only 13 pages in the 1981 collection of Zhang's short stories.¹ The most technically successful part of the story is the description of the emotional showdown between the husband and wife as they apportion blame and responsibility for their dying son. Seen through the eyes of a young child this showdown appears to the reader as an almost unbearable impasse:

¹ Zhang Tianyi duanpian xiaoshuo xuanji 《张天翼短篇
小说选集》 Beijing: Wenhua yishu Publishing House (1981).

"If I had known sooner I wouldn't have gone off to be a wetnurse even if I had been starving to death, I I you devil! You will be boiled in oil! The pittance I got from wetnursing, a few coppers, You actually took those few coppers and went to play mahjong and drink, abandoning Xiao lianer"

That devil said:

"Humph!"

He spat out a mouthful of saliva. He wore an expression like big brother after being scolded.

("我早知道这样我就饿死也不出去带奶,我.....我.....你这个鬼!要下油锅的!.....几个带奶的钱,几个.....你倒拿去推牌九,喝酒,丢下小连儿....")

那个鬼说:

"哼!"

他吐了口唾沫。他象哥哥挨了骂的那么副脸色。)

Rather than degenerating into a laughing stock as Mao Dun suggests, the story is in fact enhanced by being observed from a young child's standpoint, for this helps to maintain a degree of authorial distance from the subject matter and saves the story from becoming excessively indulgent.

'The Bao Family, Father and Son'.

Zhang's story 'The Bao Family, Father and Son' 包氏父子¹ is particularly interesting because the character of Lao Bao 老包 is known to have been based upon an old man of Zhang's acquaintance. The old man who was the model for Lao Bao worked as concierge at the house where Zhang's elder sister lived in Nanjing.² Unfortunately it is not clear whether the story

1 Wenxue 2:4 (1. 4. 1934).

2 Personal interview with Shen Chengkuan, Beijing, 1. 4. 1981.

Personal interview with Wu Zuxiang, Beijing, 29. 4. 1981.

Wu Zuxiang described the servant in question as a cook.

itself was based on the experiences of his sister's concierge or whether Zhang merely wove his story around a character in real-life who was familiar to him.

This story once again returns attention to the victims of society. Lao Bao is struggling to send his son to a 'foreign' school, but finds himself increasingly in debt as he tries to meet the fees. The son for his part treats his father with undisguised condescension and shows no gratitude for the sacrifices that his father is making on his behalf. Bao Guowei 包国维, the son, increases the pressures weighing upon his father by repeatedly failing his end-of-term examinations and spending the money his father has given him for new books on sports equipment and haircream.

The story which is divided into five numbered sections builds slowly up to its inevitable climax revealing through its frequently shifting focus the attitudes, interests and feelings of Lao Bao, his son, Lao Bao's friends, his son's friends. The narrator even goes so far as to reveal the content of one of Bao Guowei's adolescent fantasies. The reality of the relationship between Lao Bao and his son is revealed with some care to the reader. A series of incidents serve to reveal its true nature; Bao Guowei returns home to find his father talking with some of his friends, and makes them feel obliged to go away; on another occasion Lao Bao calls to his son in the street but is snubbed; Lao Bao tries to please his son by buying a jar of haircream, but his son rudely refuses it saying that it is the wrong brand. Bao Guowei exhibits the petulance of a spoilt child in all his dealings with his father.

The final section describes the inevitable crisis. It is New Year's Day and one of Lao Bao's creditors turns up on his doorstep and demands to be repaid his loan. Lao Bao tries to stall him but to no avail. Just at this moment Lao Bao is summoned to his son's school. He arrives there to be told by the headmaster that his son has been expelled for fighting and, together with another pupil, putting a student in hospital. The headmaster goes on to inform Lao Bao that he must pay half

the hospital expenses. This proves all too much for Lao Bao; he is deeply distressed at the news of his son's expulsion, his impatient creditor is still by his side, and now the school is demanding money to pay hospital expenses. He bursts into tears and claims that he cannot pay any money. Besieged by problems on every side he appears to be a broken man. In desperation, he says he has a way to raise the money and sets off accompanied by a member of the school staff, his creditor and his creditor's intermediary to seek out the guarantor of the debt. Lao Bao leads them hither and thither until the staff member loses his temper and Lao Bao collapses on the ground: "His head was shaking, and his body followed the direction of his head — he walked back a few steps. His back bumped against a wall; his legs gave way, and he sat down with a bump on the ground."

This story does not consider Lao Bao's motives in wishing to send his son to a 'foreign' school. The desire of parents to see their children do better than themselves probably went without saying. The size of the financial burden on Lao Bao is however drawn to the reader's attention. Lao Bao earns 10 dollars per month and his son's school fees for one session come to 51.50 dollars.

One of the overriding impressions left by the story is the lack of sympathy and humanity shown by Lao Bao's oppressors. There is an element in his son's fees charging 20 dollars for making a new uniform each year. Lao Bao tries to avoid paying this charge since his son had only worn the previous year's uniform a few times. He is given short shrift at the bank where the fees must be paid. The bank staff and other parents paying fees treat Lao Bao contemptuously. When he goes to the school to plead his case he is again treated with contempt and a lack of sympathy by the school bursary's staff.

Lao Bao, like Taiyi in the earlier 'Retribution', crumples under the weight of debt and force of circumstance. For such characters as these there is no hope that their lives or circumstances will improve, for once their fortunes have been set on a downward course there is no respite.

Impoverished, oppressed characters people many of Zhang's stories and whether they are attempting to climb the slippery petit-bourgeois ladder of self-improvement as Lao Bao is in sending his son to a 'foreign' school, or whether they are resigned to their ill-starred fate as is the case with Taiyi in 'Retribution' and the tubercular mother in 'A Common Occurrence', the outlook at the end of each of these stories is uniformly bleak. Zhang's stories portray a world where those least well-equipped to survive are seen struggling or despairing in the face of insurmountable odds. Only one character is conspicuous for managing to escape the forces of oppression and subjection and that is Ren san sao in 'Back and Breasts'.

An indication that critical reaction to 'The Bao Family, Father and Son' was mixed is to be found in a review of the story by Liu Bing 流冰¹ entitled 'About "The Bao Family, Father and Son"' 关于「包氏父子」 which defends Zhang's story against the adverse criticism of a certain Yuyao jun 俞遥君 who described the story as "merely a piece of trivium".

Return to a less serious style: 'A Manufacturer of Tenderness' and 'The Welcoming Party'.

Zhang's next two stories mark a surprising return to an earlier style and throw up the possibility that they were written earlier in Zhang's literary career but for some reason were not published until later. 'A Manufacturer of Tenderness' 温柔製造者² is strongly reminiscent of 'Lackadaisical Love Story' which it resembles both in style and in content. Even the joky title belongs to Zhang's earlier period of development.

The story describes a romantic liaison between a couple of educated petit-bourgeois characters. Lao Bo 老柏, a scruffy academic, is described having an affair with a young student eleven years his junior called Jiakuan 家璇. A detailed and humorous account of their meetings is provided

1 Zhonghua ribao (27. 4. 1934).

2 Xiandai 5:1 (5. 1934).

by the narrator. An important part of their relationship consists of kissing and hugging:

.... The two of them kissed once. And immediately afterwards their two mouths met again.

She put her arms round his neck.

He put an arm round her waist.

She closed her eyes.

Lao Bo suffers from dandruff, bad breath and at one meeting with Jiaxuan the narrator notes that he has not even washed his face. The hollowness of Lao Bo's affection for Jiaxuan is signified by his frequent references to his academic work, his undisguised yawns whenever they meet and his inability to express his love for Jiaxuan without hiding behind a euphemistic 'neige' ^{FB ↑}. He is convinced that what Jiaxuan needs is tenderness and thus whenever she shows signs of dissatisfaction, he reminds himself of the need to show tenderness towards her.

The narrator reveals that their relationship follows an almost ritualised pattern, observing that whenever they meet they cannot decide where they will go. In the end, Lao Bo, ever conscious of the large amounts of his precious time that are being used up in the name of romance, makes a move to end their meetings for a time. Jiaxuan concurs with his suggestion. Reminding the reader of Lao Bo's earlier thought "In the future after we start living together, how many times must we kiss each day? Thirty times. I'm sorry perhaps it should be thirty-five times" the narrator waggishly comments on their parting: 'When she parted from him they kissed many times: I'm sorry, I cannot say for certain it was only 35 times.'

The second of these two comical stories by Zhang which is entitled 'The Welcoming Party' ^{1 欢迎会} almost descends to the level of farce. Like the preceding story 'A Manufacturer of Tenderness' it seems to belong to an earlier period in Zhang's creative development and its traces of political satire indicate a possible reason for delayed publication.

1 Zuopin 1:1 (6. 1934).

The story describes the visit of government inspector Wan 万巡视员 to a teacher-training college. In order to honour his visit the college authorities decide to put on a programme of entertainment. Unfortunately Inspector Wan arrives a week earlier than expected for his inspection. Zhao Guoguang 赵国光, the teacher in charge of a production of his own play 'Return to me my Rivers and Mountains' 《还我河山》 is told to stage a performance even though the student actors have had insufficient time to rehearse. The actors rely heavily on the prompter. As luck would have it the prompter mislays his copy of the play during the second act and when he finally finds it again the pages are all out of sequence and some parts are so grubby as to be unreadable. The play proceeds with huge pauses and ghastly mistakes worthy of the worst excesses of coarse acting. The play had been introduced as 'idealistic, futuristic and patriotic' but as a result of the muddling up of the pages of the prompt copy, the hero of the piece starts to speak the part of the traitor which makes the thrust of the play misfire disastrously. All of the people involved in the production of the play are arrested by the authorities.

Comical though the story is, the blow-by-blow description of the halting performance is laboriously recounted and quickly becomes tedious. The nature of the plot makes this virtually inevitable since a convincing description of a mangled play cannot help but lack dramatic appeal. Michael Green's The Art of Coarse Acting¹ only succeeds because it concentrates on picking out the disastrous highlights of badly performed dramatic presentations rather than presenting detailed and complete accounts of bad performances.

More stories of social comment: the oppressors v. the oppressed

Zhang's next story, 'Straight Lines' 直线系,² deals with poverty and human degradation in the countryside.

¹ London: Arrow Books (6. 1980).

² Wenyi fengjing 1:1 (1. 6. 1934).

This story like Zhang's subsequent story 'The Bodyguard'
 保镖¹ is set against a background of rural disorder.

The agents of oppression are not, however, the same; Jing taiye
 敬大爷 and his family in 'Straight Lines' are oppressed
 by marauding bandits who come and steal their property. The
 exercise of oppression in 'The Bodyguard' is a consequence of
 military in-fighting.

'Straight Lines' is a story about a rural gentry family
 stripped of their wealth and describes a part of their downward
 turn in fortune. The family are woefully incapable of adapting
 to their impoverished circumstances. Bandits have stolen most
 of the family belongings and the furniture left behind has been
 sold off in order to buy food. Jing taiye, the head of the
 household, shows every sign of going out of his mind. He swears
 at everyone: his wife, his son, and Gao dashu 高大叔 the
 family retainer. He is troubled by the thought that the other
 members of his household have food and money which they will not
 give him. He scours the house, even searching through the
 clothes of his wife and son, but finds nothing more than two
 grains of rice. Only the possible loss of face prevents Jing
 taiye from scavenging for roots in his garden. Driven by
 hunger, he even contemplates creeping out at night unobserved to
 find some roots to eat. Their house is again raided by bandits
 who search for any remaining valuables. They take Jing taiye's
 treasured table. Everyone is stripped and searched, but Jing
 taiye's wife protests when she is about to be stripped of her
 trousers. To Jing taiye's amazement his wife plucks a bank note
 from her anus. In return for the money the bandits give her
 back her clothes. Losing his presence of mind, Jing taiye in
 a state of undress chases after the bandits thinking to join
 them. When he regains his composure, he reproaches himself
 for his irrationality and returns home, falling pathetically
 to the ground where his table used to be.

Collapsing in despair on the ground would seem to be a
 characteristic of those unable to cope with oppression. Lao Bao
 in 'The Bao Family, Father and Son' sinks dispiritedly to the

1 Wenxue jikan 1:3 (1. 7. 1934).

ground at the end of that story no longer able to cope with his problems. In a similar but not identical way Taiyi's attempted suicide in 'Retribution' fits into the same thematic category.

'Straight Lines' is most interesting for its analysis of Jing taiye's increasingly twisted mind. Stripped of his wealth and much of his self-respect, he sees deceit in those closest to him even when he has no evidence or reason for thinking so. Unlike the main characters in 'Battalion Commander "Monk"' and 'Predestination and Prognostication', who are the perpetrators of treachery and deceitful deeds, Jing taiye proves to be his own worst enemy in imagining treachery and deceitful deeds perpetrated by his nearest and dearest. His mental torment is far more serious than the torment of Pig-gut in 'Pig-gut's Chagrin' or the self-indulgent introspection of Mr. Jiangzhen in 'A Man in Search of Stimulation'. Jing taiye's torment resembles most closely Lu Junyi's confusion and disorientation in 'The Dream', but whereas Lu Junyi's hardships are mainly mental, Jing taiye's anguish takes both a physical and a mental form.

Zhang's next story 'The Bodyguard' also deals with treachery and deceit, but unlike the previous story the treachery and deceit are real rather than imagined. This short work which harks back to the earlier days already described in 'Cheng Yeheng' and 'Counter Offensive' describes a power struggle within a rural community.

Lai Dacheng 来大成 arrives at the headquarters of Company Commander Xiang 向连长 who is the military commander for the local area. Apparently for his own safety, Lai Dacheng is to be escorted to the district headquarters. The reader learns that Lai Dacheng is the head of the local Peasants' Association 农民协会, and that Yang Caishen 杨材神, one of the 'local tyrants and evil gentry', is his avowed enemy. Before setting out on the journey to the district headquarters Lai Dacheng is wined and dined by Company Commander Xiang. Eventually they set out on their journey, riding in sedan chairs and accompanied by an armed escort. On the way they are ambushed by the forces of Yang Caishen.

Company Commander Xiang hands over Lai Dacheng without a fight and it becomes clear that Company Commander Xiang had earlier struck a deal with Yang Caishen to deliver Lai Dacheng into his hands. Lai Dacheng has been sold out in return for a promise of 40 rifles.

'The Bodyguard' is an unexceptional story and merely serves to paint a picture of a dangerous, wheeler-dealer, treacherous society. The agents of the story are painted in unremitting shades of grey and no attempt is made by the narrator to distinguish good and evil characters. Lai Dacheng is conspicuous for his jumpiness and fear. Company Commander Xiang is brash, outspoken and mercenary. The picture of Yang Caishen is too fleeting to afford the reader any insight into his character. What the story does achieve, however, is the capture of the atmosphere of the times (and as already pointed out above the times described would appear to be the same as those that formed the temporal background to the stories 'Cheng Yeheng' and 'Counter Offensive'.)

Zhang's next story, 'Smile' 笑¹, also describes an instance of oppression, but unlike the previous two stories which portrayed the consequences of armed aggression, 'Smile' concentrates attention on an example of domestic, social oppression. The story is most similar to 'Back and Breasts', but lacks the earlier story's scope, development and excitement. Like 'Back and Breasts', 'Smile' describes the exploitation of a woman by a dirty old man.

Faxin sao 发新嫂 seeks out Jiu ye 九爷 who appears to have influence over local affairs in the district. Her husband has been imprisoned and she asks Jiu ye to intercede on her husband's behalf. Finding himself in a position of strength and influence, Jiu ye proceeds to abuse his power over Faxin sao. He tries to coax her into smiling, and his henchman Qiang san 强三 takes her aside and advises her to spend the night with Jiu ye suggesting that Jiu ye will give her some money and may even let her husband go. In the end, Faxin sao,

¹ Xiandai 5:4 (1. 8. 1934).

worried about her husband and the needs of her family, spends an unhappy night with Jiu ye. The next morning Jiu ye gives Faxin sao a dud coin and sends her on her way. Later in the day, finding that she has been tricked, Faxin sao seeks out Jiu ye at a teahouse. Jiu ye uses this opportunity to embarrass Faxin sao by revealing their relationship in front of the 25 or 30 villagers in the teahouse. Angry and bitter beyond description, Faxin sao hurls a teapot at Jiu ye. The teapot misses its target and smashes on the floor.

The story is a powerful indictment of human cruelty and abuse of power. All the participants in the story, Jiu ye, Qiang san and the crowd of laughing bystanders in the teahouse, show not one shred of sympathy for Faxin sao's plight. Since her husband, a leading light in the district Peasants' Association, dared to stand up to Jiu ye, she became the unfortunate victim of Jiu ye's desire for revenge.

The narrative is based mainly on the observations of Qiang san and his retreat to bed, leaving Faxin sao to his master's lust, spares the reader the gorier aspects of Faxin sao's degradation. As in 'From Emptiness to Fullness', the cries and tears are described at a remove from their agent. The skilful avoidance of identifying too closely with Faxin sao, by recording the story mainly from Qiang san's standpoint, avoids the danger of slipping into sentimentality or excessive pathos. Another skilful authorial artifice is the description of the physical ugliness of Jiu ye and Qiang san. Repeated mention is made of Jiu ye's multicoloured teeth, squiffy eyes, nervous twitches and sharp, probing tongue. This is all clearly intended to heighten the reader's horror and disgust at Faxin sao's misfortune. As in so many of Zhang's stories, Faxin sao, like Lao Bao in 'The Bao Family, Father and Son' and Jing taiye in 'Straight Lines', sinks defeated to the ground at the end of the story.

The adult world seen through the eyes of children:

'Instruction' and 'Chocolate'.

'Instruction 教训'¹ and 'Chocolate' 巧克力²
 both present interesting glimpses of the world of adults
 filtered through the perceptions of children.

'Instruction' describes three young children acting out a dramatic reconstruction of a scene involving their parents. It appears that an elderly employee of the father of two of the children had been sacked for not coming to work. As a consequence there had been a row between the father and the mother, the mother accusing the father of heartlessness in sacking Tuobei 驼背 who had worked faithfully for the family business for nine years and who had failed to come to work only because his son was critically ill. The father embarrassed by what he has done asks his accomplice Yao bobo 姚伯伯, the father of the third child, to help him find a way of being permanently rid of Tuobei. They come up with a plan of spreading rumours to blacken Tuobei's reputation and cause him to be arrested.

All this background to the story is communicated indirectly to the reader by way of the children's re-enactment of their parents' doings. Not only is the plot a series of flashbacks to earlier events but these earlier events are given a particular gloss and unique significance when seen through the eyes of the children. In this respect, the story, whilst falling into the same category as 'After moving House' and 'Bees', marks a development in presentational sophistication over Zhang's earlier stories.

Having reached this point, the children are interrupted by their two fathers. Discovering that the children know so much about their activities and fearing that they might spill the beans to their mothers, they decide to buy the children's silence. The children are given two dollars to divide between them; the eldest child receives one dollar whilst the other two are told to divide the rest between them.

1 Guo wen zhoubao 11:40 (8. 10. 1934).

2 Wenyi huabao 1:1 (10. 10. 1934).

The eldest child is taught to recite a catechism:

"Is your father a good man or a bad man?"

"Father is a good man."

"Is Tuobei a good man or a bad man?"

When the child hesitates to answer the father is furious.

The best indication that the instruction of the title is having its effect is revealed when the child told to share a dollar shortchanges the other child. And again when Yao bobo declares that the children's new wealth lets him off buying them a promised ball, his son replies: "This money belongs to each of us. The ball is for you to buy for us, it's not up to us."

The implication is that the children have already learnt to be ruthless like their fathers and that the way they will conduct themselves in future has already been determined.

The story reveals Zhang at his most skilful and includes subtle touches that add to the sophistication of the story. The little girl is playing with an open-topped bottle containing mercury seemingly oblivious of any danger; and at the end of the story it is uncertain if or when the mother of two of the children will return after walking out after a quarrel with their father.

'Chocolate' describes two school-age children from a poor and underprivileged background. The older age-range of the children in comparison with those in the previous story is reflected in their greater maturity and the creeping in of ambition. The children in 'Instruction' simply mimic the actions of their parents and display the keen observation and ingenuousness that is characteristic of young children.

'Chocolate' is thematically cognate with 'The Bao Family, Father and Son' since every attempt of the boys to better themselves is thwarted.

The plot is relatively simple. Bian Dequan 卞德全, develops an overwhelming curiosity to know what chocolate tastes like (his sister works in a chocolate factory but has never eaten any). One day his dream seems to be realised when he

gets hold of a box of chocolates as a reward for helping a rich kid involved in a fight. Limping home with his hard-won prize, Bian Dequan is discovered by his mother who is afraid he may have stolen the chocolates and who is unsympathetic about his desire to try just one chocolate. To Bian Dequan's dismay, his mother and sister advocate the selling of the box of chocolates unopened. Eventually they bow to his wishes when they discover that his heart is set on trying a chocolate. Bian Dequan, however, shamed by his mother and sister decides on a plan to sell off the box of chocolates at a reduced price in return for a sample. Whilst he and his friend are trying to sell the box to disinterested couples taking an evening stroll, Bian Dequan is accused of stealing the chocolates and is taken to a police station by a policeman.

In spite of the straightforwardness of the plot, Zhang makes good use of opportunities to introduce comedy into the story. Bian Dequan's teacher reveals: "Chocolate is made from a plant, which is called coconut Chocolate's taste is bitter." Whilst a pupil chips in: "I know, I know: it's savoury." Bian Dequan for his part fantasises about a pig-like chocolate, with fur and skin and an up-turned nose!

The straitened circumstances of the Bian household and their lowly social status is an impression that is carefully built up during the course of the story. There are frequent examples of their low-life speech patterns, as for example Bian Dequan's repeated use of the swear-word 'Malegedan' 妈勒格蛋, and his mother's comic reproach upon hearing him swear: "Be damned! Where did you learn this damn language, damn child, be damned!" (「要死!你哪儿学来的这死话,死孩子,要死的!」)

In their different ways, both 'Instruction' and 'Chocolate' are moral stories. 'Instruction' points to the evil that children can learn from their parents, whilst 'Chocolate' reveals the unhappy consequences of adolescent curiosity in an age when the wealthy oppressed the poor and weak. The subtlety of the stories lies in their indirectness of approach and the

skill Zhang showed in convincingly observing the psychology and behaviour of children and adolescents. One of Zhang's greatest strengths as a writer of short stories in 1930s China was his ability to offer a new slant on contemporary society by writing stories viewing the adult world through the eyes of children.¹

'My Wife': a dramatic monologue.

'My Wife' 我的太太² is a monologue, much in the style of the subsequent 'A Piece of Female Instruction' 闺训篇, and marking a distinct improvement in technique over the earlier monologue 'San taiye and Guisheng'. The story captures the narrator's tone of voice, much as Browning's 'My Last Duchess' brings to life the voice of an old duke reminiscing. The greatest structural improvement is the eradication of unreported interruptions by the listener, a characteristic which mars the earlier 'San taiye and Guisheng'. The story also has a directness and immediacy unusual in Zhang's earlier stories and this is attributable to the fact that the first-person narrator of the monologue is the husband of the subject of his discourse. Zhang's narrative method is usually to keep his narrator at some distance from the action; earlier exceptions were the 'agitational' stories like 'The Twenty-one' and 'The Road' whose narrators were members of a group at the centre of the action.

The style of 'My Wife' is strongly reminiscent of de Maupassant's technique of dressing a story up as an after-dinner monologue, as for example in his collection of stories Contes de la Bécasse. The story also exhibits interesting symmetry returning at the end to recall the remark made at the beginning. The first sentence is: "And you mention my wife: this sort of person both attracts love and repels love." The last sentence is: "My wife then behaves like this — she both attracts love and repels love." Lu Xun, notably in his story

¹ See Mao Dun's review of 'Strange Meeting' 奇遇, Wenxue 3:1 (1. 7. 1934).

² In Yixing 《忆行》, Shanghai: Liangyou Publishing Co. (24. 10. 1934).

'Storm in a Teacup' 风波, was fond of using this technique of returning a story at its end to the point at which it began.

The story is a compassionate account of the narrator's husband's young wife who finds herself unable to cope with the problems of day-to-day living. When they first marry all goes smoothly because they can afford to employ a servant to cook and do household chores, but subsequently the husband is moved to Nanjing to take up a clerical position at a salary of only 20 dollars per month. No longer able to afford a servant, the wife is faced with the daunting tasks of cooking, cleaning and washing. Her inability to cook makes her husband lose his temper, which in turn reduces her to tears. She becomes a snivelling wreck, wiping mucus on the wall of their house. She appears also to suffer from anorexia nervosa. The narrator reports that yet another year has gone by and there is still no sign of improvement in their circumstances.

The story achieves its effect by use of illustrative anecdotes, the most striking of which, is the narrator's description of a Chinese New Year celebration. He had bought a chicken as a treat and told his wife to slaughter it. When she could not bear to touch it, he slaughters it for her, but even then she is still afraid to come near it. The husband plucks the bird and draws out the offal. Once cooked the chicken is tough with a disgusting flavour and thus inedible. Chastened, the husband urges his wife to drink with him, but she refuses and bursts into tears.

The implication of the story is that the husband and wife are caught in the trap of their poverty and without a radical change in their fortunes, their circumstances can only worsen; the story contains no sign that any change is likely or probable.

'Moving on': a study in female psychology.

Like 'My Wife', 'Moving on' ¹ 移行 has a heroine.

1 In Yixing «移行» Shanghai: Liangyou tushu gongsi (24. 10. 1934).

Sang Hua 桑华, who is the wife of a rubber and sugar magnate, is a rare example of a character who is comfortably off. Unlike the priggish Xin Shuliang in Zhang's play 'Hero of the Age', Sang Hua is presented less as a caricature and more as a psychological case-study.

The reader learns as a result of flashback that Sang Hua had once been involved with some revolutionaries. She even says at one point, in confidence to her friend and much to her friend's surprise, that she originally married her wealthy husband not for love, but for the revolution:

"The reason why I chummed up with him was for,
was for"

"For what?"

"For — for — for the revolution."

One of her revolutionary friends had contracted tuberculosis and was in rapidly deteriorating health. Sang Hua hoped to extract money from her wealthy boyfriend in order to help her comrades. Upset and frightened by the sight of her dying comrade, she throws herself into her relationship with her rich boyfriend only to find that she rather enjoys the rich, fast lifestyle that she can now enjoy. When she eventually tries to contact her comrades again, she finds they have disappeared, and a mutual friend refuses to tell her where they have gone. She writes a long letter to her old comrade explaining her traumas and feelings about life. She entrusts this letter to the mutual friend. Finally after a brief courtship Sang Hua marries her wealthy boyfriend.

Having finished her reminiscence, the action returns to the present. To dispel her despondency, Sang Hua advocates a row on the lake, not forgetting to take a couple of bottles of wine with them.

The story is divided into four sections; the first and last describing Sang Hua's present circumstances, as she sits talking with her friend Liu jie 六姐. At the end of the first section, Sang Hua sinks into a brown study, which is the cue for

a flashback that lasts for two sections and reveals chronologically Sang Hua's memories of her past. The use of flashback in this story marks a great improvement over the earlier story 'From Emptiness to Fullness' which was Zhang's first story to make use of flashback and then only in a rudimentary fashion.

Another sign that 'Moving on' is a more sophisticated story is that it does not attempt to provide a complete picture, leaving the reader with several unanswered questions. The reader, like Sang Hua, does not know whether her tuberculous comrade died or not. Why did the other comrade move and why will their mutual friend not tell Sang Hua where he has gone? Did Sang Hua's long letter to her comrade ever reach its destination? Use is also made of the technique of hinting rather than explicitly stating things. At the end of the story, it is revealed that there are rumours that the rubber market is about to collapse which would mean the financial ruin of Sang Hua's husband. The reader is left to ponder the possible consequences to the heroine without knowing whether there is any truth in the rumour.

Once again, Zhang throws a dim light in this story onto the activities of those on the fringe of society; in this case, as in the earlier 'From Emptiness to Fullness', 'Predestination and Prognostication', and 'Battalion Commander "Monk"', he throws light on underground revolutionaries. Of all the previous references to underground revolutionaries, the descriptions in 'Moving on' are the least oblique.

The respect in which 'Moving on' is least successful is the analysis of Sang Hua's psychology. Sang Hua's progress from being a hanger-on with revolutionaries to becoming a member of the social class which those revolutionaries would presumably like to see destroyed is too smooth to be really convincing. Sang Hua's heart-searching seems to be limited to the writing of one long all-purging letter.

The strengths of 'Moving on' lie in its use of sophisticated short story narrative techniques such as flashbacks and the rejection of the tendency to leave nothing unexplained.

A Study in Morality: 'A Good Deed'.

A large number of Zhang's stories written between 1933 and 1936 deal with questions of dubious morality. The emotional blackmail exercised by Jiu ye over Faxin sao in 'Smile' is a good example. Subsequently, a clue to this kind of story is often afforded by its title. 'A Good Deed' 善举¹ in the light of its content turns out to have a particularly ironic title. Subsequent stories with ironic titles that deal with questions of dubious morality include 'Friendship' 友谊, 'Magnanimity' 度量 and possibly most ironic of all 'A Pillar of Society' 砥柱.

In the case of 'A Good Deed' a moral crisis occurs when a comfortably-off functionary invites a beggar into his home to eat some food. In a good mood after winning a tidy sum at mahjong, Mr. Chai 柴先生, generously invites a grubby, ragged beggar into his house. He tells his servant to make the beggar a bowl of rice. Before the food is ready, however, Mr. Chai, is so filled with feelings of unease at the presence of the beggar, that he bundles him out of the house without more ado.

In earlier stories that dealt with the contrast between the haves and the have-nots, the centre of reader interest was usually with the have-nots, as in 'A Prosperous Year' and 'Honeymoon Life', but increasingly in his stories of the mid 1930s, Zhang came to consider the mentality of the haves in their dealings with the have-nots. In 'A Good Deed', the reader learns nothing of what is passing through the mind of the beggar; description of him is limited to his few mumbled words of conventional thanks, and his appearance and posture as they appear to Mr. Chai. Thanks to the narrator, the reader does, however, gain some interesting insights into the thinking of Mr. Chai. Having unceremoniously cursed and turfed out the beggar, he suddenly panics that the beggar might out of anger try and break into his house and steal his things. Almost immediately he heaves a sigh of relief when he remembers that the beggar is too weak

¹ Da gong bao (wenyi fukan) (17. 11. 1934).

to do any such thing because he has not eaten for three days. Far from showing any signs of guilt or remorse at his behaviour, Mr. Chai at the end of the story reveals only anger and impatience.

'Old Ming's Story': a tale of treachery.

'Old Ming's Story' 老明的故事¹ though not published until the end of 1934, belongs to the same group of stories as 'Counter Offensive', 'Cheng Yeheng' and 'The Bodyguard'. Like 'Counter Offensive' and 'Cheng Yeheng' it is set in the period of the Northern Expedition (i.e. 1926-27).

The story is really a tale within the framework of a story — a favourite method with writers of the modern short story. Lao Ming, who is an old campaigner from Northern Expedition days, tells his tale to a group of friends gathered for dinner in a restaurant. The story begins and ends with conversation amongst the dinner guests. These conversations frame Lao Ming's tale. His tale is about an incident in which a mercenary agrees to assume the identity of another man in return for a sum of money. He falls into the wrong hands and is first tortured and finally killed for his pains. The tale is not unlike 'The Bodyguard' with its themes of treachery and double-dealing and its vigilante band setting. Where 'Old Ming's Story' differs is in the philosophical framework in which it is set. Before beginning to recount his tale, Lao Ming asks his audience: "Would you say that a man's lot is entirely dependent on fate?" Having told his tale, which he sees as an illustration of his point of view, he again returns to the subject of Fate and its place in deciding destinies.

From time to time in his literary works, Zhang touched on the question of Fate. The sick woman in 'Towards a New Road' was preoccupied with the thought of a personified Fate. Shu Keji in 'Predestination and Prognostication' would like to believe in Fate when fortune-tellers predict good fortune for him. In the later story 'Virtuous Women' 善女人 the superstitious old lady Changsheng nainai 长生奶奶 believes

¹ Shuixing 1:2 (11. 1934) 114-128.

in a Buddhist conception of fate. In all of these stories Zhang's attitude as author towards the question of Fate appears neutral, the implication being that Fate is a philosophical topic that lends weight to after-dinner conversation.

'Wanren Association' and 'Boys and Girls': Zhang's first attempts to write longer stories with rural settings.

'Wanren Association' 万仞约¹ and 'Boys and Girls' 儿女们² are long stories by comparison with most of the stories that Zhang wrote during his mature creative period.³ These two stories are important in Zhang's creative development because they represent his first attempts at detailed stories of rural life. They communicate, by means of their narrative style, the slow unhurried pace of country life. Unlike Zhang's city and small town stories, 'Wanren Association' and 'Boys and Girls' seem to have replaced economy of language in description with the striving after the creation of an atmosphere. In both stories the lingering evil of a corrupt semi-feudal society is everywhere apparent.

'Wanren Association' deals with a peasant association run by Min Guilin 闵贵林, a thoroughly unpleasant character who tries to play one villager off against another. Finally he is discovered to be pocketing interest on loans of grain made on behalf of the Association, and receives his come-uppance. The story takes place against a background of hard times when grain and firewood are in short supply. Earlier in the story, Min Guilin uses his position to oppress the son of a villager who falls foul of the Association's rules when out of desperation he tries to cut down some firewood. Come the end of the story Min Guilin is himself the victim of oppression, his influential senior relative has disowned him, he has been beaten up and

1 Wenxue 3:5 (1. 11. 1934); 3:6 (1 12. 1934).

2 Wenxue jikan 1:4 (16. 12. 1934).

3 In the 1979 collection of Zhang's stories Zhang Tianyi xiaoshuo xuanji 《张天翼短篇小说选集》 Beijing: Renmin wenxue Publishing House (7. 1979) these stories run to 55 and 43 pages respectively.

has lost his job as secretary to the Association. With no land of his own, Min Guilin has nothing to look forward to but starvation.

'Boys and Girls' concentrates attention on an elderly peasant who is increasingly out of touch with reality. Persuaded into making a match between his daughter and the relative of a wealthy member of the community, he becomes dispirited when his daughter runs away from home. As the story progresses he becomes increasingly disillusioned with both his other children, two boys. The position of the old man, Guangchuan bobo 广川伯伯, is further complicated by the fact that he received 50 dollars in exchange for agreement to the marriage contract. He is also under an obligation to subscribe to a fund to strengthen the defences of the village. An undercurrent of revolt runs through the village, and both sons of Guangchuan bobo are involved in the plan to oppose the levy on the villagers; they argue that better defences will only benefit those most able to afford to improve them. At the end of the story, Guangchuan bobo appears as a broken and disillusioned old man, frightened by what he sees going on around him.

These two stories are different in both style and setting when compared with Zhang's previous works and represent a new departure in Zhang's development. The stories are longer, present a larger spread of characters and contain lengthier passages of description than Zhang's earlier stories. Accordingly, they might more properly be classified as middle-length works of fiction 中篇小说.

The lengthy and detailed descriptions of Guangchuan bobo's aged movements help to reinforce the reader's impression of him, but would be out of place in most short stories. Descriptions of the local teahouse, its proprietress and customers in 'Wanren Association' add colour and fill out the background to the story, but are certainly not crucial to the plot.

With these two stories, Zhang added another type of story

to his stock of favoured types: a long story, with a rural setting, lengthy description and detailed portrayal of a central character. In the following two years, 1935-1936, Zhang was to make most notable use of this type of story in his middle-length work 'Qingming Festival' 清明时节.¹

¹ Wenxue 5:1 (1. 7. 1935).

Chapter Five

Zhang's writings (1935-1936)

Introduction

By the end of 1934, Zhang had developed a distinctive range of short story styles, and most of his 1935-1936 stories fall into previously established categories. Zhang was no longer experimenting with form or thematic content. He showed all the signs of being an accomplished writer of modern short stories with a range of tried and tested narrative methods at his disposal with which to accommodate the material he thought worth writing about.

This is not to say that Zhang's short stories written and published during the years 1935-1936 do not possess distinctive features. Most of these stories use an unobtrusive third person narrative technique and a large number of stories have rural settings unlike the majority of Zhang's earlier stories which were set against urban backgrounds and poked fun at the educated classes.

The stories with rural settings — the exploiters and the exploited, the oppressors and the oppressed.

Probably at the instigation of the League of Left-wing Writers, Zhang turned the main focus of his attention away from dissolute members of the educated classes and concentrated on portraying events in the countryside. A succession of stories that appeared in 1935 in various magazines of the day reveal from different angles and viewpoints the generally desperate circumstances of the majority of rural dwellers. 'Virtuous Women' 善女人¹ and 'Boddhisatva has given up too' 菩薩也² reveal the degenerate nature of the Buddhist church with abbots and abbesses meddling in worldly affairs to

1 Wenxue 4:1 (1. 1. 1935)

2 Wenxue jikan 2:1 (16. 3. 1935)

the detriment of their flock. In these two stories Zhang unleashes scathing attacks on the hypocrisy of the Buddhist church whose unworldly and charitable teachings are seemingly abandoned by its lieutenants in favour of the exploitative ethics of the landlord class. 'Putting in a Report' 呈报¹ on the other hand reveals the corruptibility of the bureaucracy; Mister Peng Henian 彭鹤年先生 has been assigned by the local magistrate to investigate the extent and seriousness of a drought and report back with his written recommendation. Although his sympathies lie with the tenant farmers, his mind is finally made up by a timely bribe from the local landlord. 'Qingming Festival' 清明时节² is also set against a rural background and in an extended and rather laborious narrative describes the politics and in-fighting resultant on a land dispute between two leading lights in the rural community. 'A Robbery' 抢案³ and 'Lord Snake's Failure' 蛇太爷的失败⁴ describe the hapless situation in which two different rural communities find themselves. In 'A Robbery' the local militia which is paid by the villagers to defend them against attack by marauding bandits launches an attack in disguise on the long-suffering villagers. In 'Lord Snake's Failure', another group of tenant farmers throw themselves on the mercy of the local landlord who reneges on a promise to help them and brings in the militia to implement his decision by force of arms. 'Mid-autumn Festival' 中秋⁵ reveals on a familial level the exploitation and oppression of the poor members of the rural community by those of better means; a poor relative, fallen on bad times, is invited by his heartless nephew to celebrate the Mid-autumn Festival only to be made the butt of a barrage of insults whilst being tantalised by the prospect of a delicious spread the like of which the poor, hungry, ageing uncle has not seen for many a year. In these stories, Zhang portrays the misery of tenant farmers at the hands of ruthless and unsympathetic landlords and yet although the themes of exploitation, deception, hypocrisy and corruption

1 Shuixing 1:2 (11. 1934)

2 Wenxue 5:1 (1. 7. 1935)

3 Chuangzuo 1:2 15. 7. 1935)

4 Wenxue shidai 1:2 (10. 12. 1935)

5 Wenxue shidai 1:1 (10.11. 1935)

recur to produce a consistent picture of life in the drought-stricken areas of the Chinese countryside in the early 1930s, each story presents a unique facet of rural life seen from one particular viewpoint or the viewpoints of several characters or groups of characters.

The variation of narrative standpoint is one of the distinctive characteristics of Zhang's stories published in 1935-1936. In 'Lord Snake's Failure', for example, the narrative standpoint switches several times between the amorphous group of starving farmers and the comfortably-off Lord Snake. At the beginning of the story, the reader, alongside the third-person narrator, observes the anxious group of tenant farmers who discuss their plight and options as they await the arrival of relief grain. When the farmers decide to approach Lord Snake who has shown himself a thoughtful benefactor in the past, the narrative standpoint switches to Lord Snake and his household. The reader observes at close quarters the discussions in Lord Snake's household before the narrative standpoint reverts to the farmers who have just heard rumours that Lord Snake has reneged on his promise to open up his granary to them. As the farmers march en masse on Lord Snake's granary, the narrative viewpoint returns to Lord Snake's home where the reader can observe Lord Snake's reaction to the sound of the militiamen opening fire on the farmers as they approach his granary. This narrative technique, which switches back and forth between two disparate and distinct groups of characters, is particularly appropriate for this story since Lord Snake is not an entirely unsympathetic character. In the past, according to the story, he has been known to show kindness and munificence to the farmers in their times of difficulty. Lord Snake's decision to renege on his promise to the farmers to open up his granary is the result of pressure brought to bear upon him by members of his family. At the end of the story, Lord Snake appears to show regret for he says: "... I have failed to live up to my aspirations." ("... 我做
人做失败了。"). Making use of the technique of an alternating narrative standpoint enables Zhang to show the reader that what is being described leaves no clear-cut moral

to be drawn, and is rather a complex issue open to the reader to draw conclusions.

As in Zhang's earlier stories most of the characters portrayed in these stories that describe hardships in the rural areas are distinguished by their helplessness in the face of adversity. One exception is the story 'Boddhisatva has given up too' which describes how the desperate tenant farmers of a Buddhist monastery's land use force to make the worldly abbot of the monastery sign an order to open up the monastery's grain store. Once again the narrative standpoint in this story is worth noting. At first glance, this story would appear to be in the same mould as Zhang's earlier so-called 'agitational' stories ¹. Closer inspection, however, reveals that 'Boddhisatva has given up too' does not concentrate attention on the down-trodden farmers but rather describes the action from the point of view of the abbot and his tithe-collector. The first part of the story is taken up with describing the dinner given for the abbot by the tithe-collector. They discuss the current situation in the district which is stricken by drought and the discontent amongst the tenant farmers. The abbot makes light of the farmers' opposition and his attitude hardens as he sinks more and more deeply into his cups. Suddenly the two inebriated diners are surprised by a group of farmers who burst in on their supper table and press the abbot to sign an order opening up his monastery's granary. The sly abbot finding himself in a tight corner decides to go along with their request, but keeps in his mind the idea that as soon as he escapes their clutches he will countermand the order. The farmers, well aware of the abbot's deviousness, instruct some of their number to go to the granary with the authorisation whilst they hold the abbot hostage. At this point, the abbot fearing that his plan will be foiled draws a Browning pistol and shoots one of the farmers. Forgetting their usual awe of Buddha, the farmers go berserk and beat the abbot and the tithe collector. In the earlier story 'The Bread Queue' 面包线 ² Zhang described a similar resort to arms from the point of view of the

1 See above 'The Twenty-one' and 'The Road'

2 Beidou 1:3 (20. 11. 1931)

amorphous group of recuperating soldiers who storm a granary, but in 'Boddhisatva has given up too' the events preceding the arrival of the farmers in the dining room are not described directly and are only alluded to insofar as they make up part of the conversation between the abbot and his tithe-collector. 'Boddhisatva has given up too' marks a development in Zhang's narrative technique for whereas in his earlier stories he almost invariably used a direct narrative method, describing the active participants in action at first-hand as in 'The Twenty-one', his new method is to reveal the action of the story indirectly by concentrating on the passive elements of the story up until the moment of crisis. We have already observed that 'Lord Snake's Failure' combines narrative techniques by switching the narrative standpoint by turns between the oppressors and the oppressed, but in 'Boddhisatva has given up too' the action is seen almost exclusively through the eyes of the oppressors (the only exception being a brief moment at the end of the story when the standpoint switches to the farmers to reveal their anger at being shot at by the abbot). The increasing use of indirect and complex narrative techniques marks a new sophistication in Zhang's writing.

According to Zhang's wife, 'Qing Ming Festival' was one of the stories Zhang was personally most pleased with, but as a short story it does not succeed because of its laboured exposition and merits its designation as a 'mid-length story' 中篇小说.¹ Like Zhang's novel In the City, 'Qing Ming Festival' creates a picture of a community and what distinguishes it from Zhang's short stories is its completeness and failure to leave anything unexplained or unresolved.

In 'Mid-autumn Festival', as in 'Lord Snake's Failure', the reader is able to observe both sides of the divide separating the oppressors and the oppressed. Whereas previously Zhang would place his narrative standpoint on the side of the oppressed with occasional sorties into the realm of the oppressors (as for instance in 'Little Peter' where the reader from time to time follows the little dog into the boss's warm comfortable office,

¹ Interview with Shen Chengkuan (1. 4. 1981).

whilst for most of the time the narrative standpoint is that of the workers on the factory floor), Zhang now found that he could effectively satirise the oppressive and exploitative members of society by placing his narrative standpoint amongst them.

The decline of the educated classes — '1924-1934',
'Jottings of an Odd Person' and 'Serious Living'.

In the years 1935-1936, Zhang published three stories describing the degeneration and degeneracy of members of the educated classes: '1924-1934' 一九二四—三四;¹ 'Jottings of an Odd Person' 畸人手记;² and 'Serious Living' 严肃的生活.³ Significantly all three of these stories make use of a first-person narrative technique which is particularly well-suited to portraying self-indulgent members of the educated classes.

'1924-1934' is of dubious merit as a short story using as it does the rather tired convention of a one-sided correspondence. Its significance lies in the fact that the letters written by the first-person narrator span a decade, are the work of a member of the educated class, and exhibit change. '1924-1934' consists of thirteen letters addressed by the unnamed author to his unnamed friend. The first letter is dated 3 January, 1924 and the last 18 September, 1934. The writer of the letters is prompted to write some of them as a result of current historical events, as for example, the slaying of the Five Martyrs on 30 May, 1925 and the shootings in Beijing on 18 March, 1926.

'1924-1934' reveals Zhang at his most mockingly satirical. The author of the letters reveals himself at an early stage in his correspondence as an egotistical and shallow university student.

1 Xin xiaoshuo 1:1 (15. 2. 1935); 1:2 (15. 2. 1935)

2 In a volume of stories of the same title published on 20. 1. 1936.

3 In the collection 'Spring Breeze' 《春风》 first published in November, 1936.

The early letters talk loftily of joining the revolution, but these plans come to nothing. Instead he marries and has six children. From time to time he loses his job and after an interval of unemployment finds another. He makes resolutions, as for instance to abandon his wife and children and embark on the revolutionary course, but never carries them through. The last letter in the series written in September, 1934 finds its author apparently pathetically resigned to his fate, isolated and lonely.

'1924-1934' shows a measure of Zhang's confidence as a writer for to present a retrospective panorama of one person's changing attitudes over a decade is no mean achievement. The author of the letters exhibits a variety of moods during the course of his correspondence, ranging from self-righteous indignation, superciliousness, anger, resolve, indecisiveness to despondency, despair and self-pity in the final letter of the series. The experiences and circumstances of the letter-writer recall the experiences and circumstances of several of the characters in Zhang's other stories and novels; like Bai Muyi 白慕易 in One Year, he is driven to suicide and throws himself into the river, the only difference being that his suicide bid fails comically whereas Bai Muyi's is successful; like Li Jingye 李荆野 in 'From Emptiness to Fullness', the author of the letters associates with 'revolutionaries' but never actively commits himself to their cause. The anonymous letter-writer appears as an archetype of the ineffectual educated young man in the 1920s and 30s: he attends university but belittles its importance; he marries for love; he comes from a landed landlord family; he talks loftily of revolution and is moved by events of the day but lacks the courage of his convictions; he makes excuses for his failure to participate in the movement in which he ostensibly believes; he thinks of himself as a 'new' man but even his maladroit grasp of the vernacular is tainted with classicisms.

In '1924-1934', Zhang also shows himself as the master of different styles of writing. Apart from revealing virtuosity, this also gives the reader the impression of change and the passage of time. The letter-writer in his opening missive dispatched on 3 January, 1924 goes overboard with his enthusiastic use of the

genitival particle de 的 :

"... He is a common, ordinary, foolish fellow. His grandfather and father were foolish farmers, ignorant and preoccupied with money, pitiful and common things! ..."

("...他是庸俗的平凡的愚蠢的人！他的祖父和父亲是愚蠢的农夫，无知无识而视钱如命的可怜的而庸俗的东西呵！...")

In a subsequent letter dated 3 August, 1930, he makes a fool of himself when trying to show off his use of the passive voice in the new vernacular:

"Take my colleagues, they too have begun to read new books, and as a result, new terminology has been incorrectly used

Yes, the dregs of the old life must be swept away

Life is melancholy. Oh, this business of endlessly producing children is something that cannot be overcome.

Yesterday I met a diminutive old friend whom I have not seen for many years, Mr. Wu. He was passing through here on his way to Shanghai. I was told something which can be regarded as a pleasing piece of good news, that is, Yuqi is somewhere still pursuing the same course he originally embarked upon, his health has been impaired, but, he is optimistic, yes, optimism has always befallen foolish people, and because of this, only such individuals can hold onto the courage to live the new life. In this respect, Yuqi is perhaps stronger than me, even though he is not a great man."

"即如我的一般同事罢，也开始读新书了，于是新的术语被不正确地用了出来，..."

是的，旧的生活底沉渣是非被扫除不可的。....

生活是悲惨的。唉，不断地生孩子之一事，是非被克服不可的。

昨日遇见了矮小的多年不见的旧友吴君，他是路过此地而到上海去的。当作一个可喜的好消息，我是被告诉一件事，这是，玉麒在某地仍然生活在他原去着的程途上，健康是被损害了，但是，他是乐观的，是的，乐观往往被落在愚蠢者身上的，因为这，一个人方可以把握住新的生活底勇气。在这一点，玉麒也许比我强，虽然他不是伟大的。...."

Whereas in Zhang's earlier stories about the educated classes such as 'Lackadaisical Love Story', he was content merely to make the reader laugh at the objects of his satire, the satire used in '1924-1934' is of a sharper, more incisive kind intended to make the reader mock and scorn his targets. In the aftermath of the Japanese invasion of China in September, 1931 sterner satire of those who failed to help the cause of resistance to the invaders was called for.

In 'Jottings of an Odd Person', Zhang satirises an educated man with a landlord family background who finds himself caught unhappily between the old guard and the new youth. He is by turns drawn to the old guard as represented by his bibulous and scheming uncle who would like to instil a liking for classical poetry in his nephew and encourages ruthlessness in managing property, and to the younger members of the household who are surreptitiously engaged in anti-Japanese resistance activities. Finding himself tricked by his uncle into paying excessively high interest on a loan (the old man had included a handsome cut for himself) and being distrusted by his younger cousins because of

his association with the older members of the household and because of his dubious views, he finally hides himself and his family away in a locked room suffering from mistrust and paranoia. His attempts to be on friendly terms with both his elders and juniors fail and merely ensure that he is isolated and rejected by all parties. The story is divided into sections and each section has its own caption. In form it resembles a series of journal entries not dissimilar to the format of 'A Diary of Ghostland'.

An altogether slighter work is 'Serious Living' which is a series of diary entries spanning a period of about six months. In this work Zhang pokes fun at the idle members of the educated classes who attempt to justify their frivolous life-styles by pursuing the 'serious'. Like the author of the letters in '1924-1934', the author of the diary is also a graduate of university and he associates with other graduates. Their life is taken up with drinking, eating and playing mahjong but they have pretensions to a life of idealism. The diary entries describing the life of the author, his wife and their friends serve to reveal the hollowness of their lives. The most telling remark is the husband's answer to his wife's question as to why their lives should be serious to be found at the end of the concluding entry:

"Why should we be serious like this!? Of course our lives have to be serious! Of course they have to be conscientious! Otherwise if we muddle through life in a daze, what difference is there between us and the pigs in the pigsty?"

(「何必这样严肃!? 我们的生活当然要严肃! 当然要认真! 不然的话糊里糊涂混过日子, 跟猪栏里的猪有什么分别呢....」)

Zhang also satirises the vacuousness of their lives by drawing attention to the wife's inability to cook or make tea and when she does bring herself to try her hand at cooking there is a delay whilst she finds herself a suitable costume in which to cook; the implication being that culinary trappings are as important as technique.

Stories about the position of women in society:

'After leaving', 'A Piece of Female Instruction', 'A Honey-flavoured Night', 'A Pillar of Society', 'In Search of Victory', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Mate'.

In his stories written in 1935 and 1936, Zhang took a renewed and profounder interest in the position of women in contemporary society.

'After leaving' 出走以后¹ describes a young woman who has bettered herself by marrying a wealthy man but who grows dissatisfied with her husband because of his sharp business practices. Bent on securing a divorce from her husband she returns to the house of her parents. There she makes the announcement of her impending divorce to her shocked parents who do all they can to dissuade her. Feeling at odds with her parents, she summons her mentor, Seventh uncle 七叔, a school-teacher who had originally introduced her to her husband. Finally feeling able to unburden herself, she explains her dissatisfaction with her husband: she claims that her husband spreads rumours that his company is in financial difficulties in order to hold down wages and increase working hours. Seventh uncle does his best to placate the distraught young woman. His argument is as follows:

".... however life is life is eh, we can explain life and thought as two separate entities"

(".... 不过生活是 生活是 呢, 我们不妨把生活跟思想——解释成两回事。....")

Although not entirely won over by Seventh uncle's argument, the young wife is quickly won over to the idea of returning to her husband when she reflects on what she would lose by divorce and when she sees a telegram sent to Seventh uncle by her contrite and anxious husband her mind is made up. Thus as a result of this face-saving formula she prepares to return to her husband.

1 Wen fan xiaopin 1:2 (5. 3. 1935)

Like Sang Hua 桑华 in 'Moving on' 移行, the young wife passes through a crisis only to resume her life as before. Interestingly, from a sociological point of view, Seventh uncle claims that the young wife's dissatisfactions with her husband would not constitute sufficient grounds for divorce; the implication being that the young woman's options for improving her situation are very limited. This gives the lie to Seventh uncle's philosophical tenets as imparted to her before her marriage:

He made her realise that a woman is a 'person', he made her broaden her vision to see just how big this world is, he taught her how to use her brain.

他叫她知道女人是个“人”，他叫她放眼去看这世界到底有多大，他教会她怎样用她的脑筋。

Thus although she has been taught to regard herself as her husband's equal and she knows that what her husband is doing in putting the squeeze on his workers is unethical, she appears powerless to bring about a change in her husband's attitude and behaviour.

In 'A Piece of Female Instruction' 闺训篇¹ attention is drawn to the generation gap, a gap which was already to be observed in the previous story discussed, 'After leaving', since the young disgruntled wife was at odds with her parents. Taking the form of a dramatic monologue, 'A Piece of Female Instruction' is the substance of a lecture delivered by a mother to her teenage daughter. The daughter's replies to her mother are not recorded which serves to increase the oppressive nature of the mother's tirade. Zhang's interest in the divide between the generations was first to be found in 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' and reappeared in 'The Bao Family, Father and Son'. In 'A Piece of Female Instruction', Zhang shows that differences and confrontations between the generations are not limited to the male members of families. The story shows clearly the extent of the differences in interests and experiences of the 19 year old daughter and her 53 year old mother. Whereas the daughter is interested in books

1 Funu shenghuo 2:1 (16. 1. 1936).

written in the vernacular and modern drama her mother prides herself on her knowledge of classical literature and is an aficionado of Peking opera and the singing of Mei Lanfang 梅兰芳. Zhang points up these differences and clearly takes the side of the daughter even though none of her part of the conversation with her mother is recorded. By making the mother appear ridiculous and hypocritical, Zhang effectively deflates her standing in the eyes of the reader. Particularly laughable is the mother's repeated scolds of her daughter for being garrulous when she herself is a prime example of garrulousness. She condemns herself through her own mouth by interspersing her self-righteous moralising with examples of her activities that are the realisation of the lapses she so vociferously decries. For instance she advocates the division of labour between husband and wife, with the husband taking responsibility for matters outside the home and the wife caring for household matters. The thought that she is neglecting her household duties when she goes out for frequent mahjong sessions does not even cross her mind. Rather than concentrating on the object of oppression as in the story 'Smile' 笑, Zhang in this story concentrates on the oppressive agent, in this case the tyrannical mother.

In 'A Honey-flavoured Night' 蜜味的夜¹ a poor city girl is exploited by a decadent member of the petit-bourgeois class Jin Weili 金维利. A dissolute literary buff, he buys the favours of Mimi 密密, a pretty young girl, who needs money to help her family. The unfortunate Mimi is disgusted by her benefactor who gives her slobbery kisses and whose haircream falls icily onto her snowy bosom. She is carried off to bed by her patron who attempts to rape her and angered by her reluctance beats her cruelly. Mimi manages to escape from the bedroom and collapses hysterically onto the sofa. She is however persuaded by Jin's weak-kneed associates to return to the bedroom. Like 'Smile' 笑 this story reveals the venal exploitation of women; in both stories the victim of oppression is portrayed with compassion, but no possibility of escape from an inevitable sequence of events is suggested to the reader. Jin Weili and his set

¹ Wenxue 6:4 (1. 4. 1936).

are reminiscent of the Symbolist poets in 'A Diary of Ghostland' with their frivolous preoccupations, but rather than ridiculing them in the same way as the dilettante couple in 'Lackadaisical Love Story' by concentrating exclusively on their frivolous activities, 'A Honey-flavoured Night' presents a more complex slice of Shanghai society embracing as it does the well-to-do and pretentious literary set and Mimi whose impoverished family are refugees from Beijing. By broadening his canvas Zhang was able to capture the irony of a situation in which Mimi retains sufficient self-respect to find Jin's slobbery kisses disgusting thereby raising his ire since he feels that she is in no position to look down on him. Mimi's stature is also raised as a result of this observation by the narrator:

As soon as they observed her bite him, and scratch him, the two outside [Jin's voyeuristic associates] then felt some small measure of satisfaction, as though they could make use of this to raise their pitiful standing a little.

一看见她咬了男的一口，搔了男的一把，外面这两个就稍为感到满足，好像可以借这一手来把他俩可怜的地位抬高一些似的。

In 'A Pillar of Society' 砥柱¹ there are two female characters: the daughter of the main character; and a young woman suckling her child. The story hinges on the hypocritical attitude of Mr. Huang Yian 黄宜庵老先生 towards his daughter and the young mother. Mr. Huang is very anxious that his daughter should not be corrupted and keeps a close eye on her. He gives every appearance of being scandalised when he observes his daughter talking to the woman who is feeding her baby. He hurriedly calls his daughter to him and reproaches her. She greets his reproaches with puzzlement. Later Mr. Huang overhears a lewd conversation being conducted in the next cabin on the boat on which they are travelling and worried lest his daughter should

¹ Zuojia 1:2 (15.5. 1936)

hear, he goes to put a stop to it. He finds, however, that one of the participants is an old acquaintance and he is drawn into the conversation charged with relating his sexual encounters. Chuffed yet uneasy he first orders his daughter to go and join the young mother where she will be out of earshot.

On the surface, Mr. Huang, as the title of the story would lead one to expect, appears to be a bastion of respectable society, possessing high moral standards, but in reality his morality is no more than a cultivated pose. Once he is closeted with those of his acquaintance and standing, he shows his true colours, relapsing into the debauched revelry of the comfortably-off who possess both power and position. Mr. Huang's attitude towards women appears particularly base for whilst he goes to great lengths to shield his daughter from anything that hints of sex, he himself harbours sexual fantasies about the young mother suckling her baby:

He thought again about that pair of full breasts.

(他又想到那对肥泡泡的奶子,...)

As though to emphasise the twisted nature of Mr Huang's thoughts, frequent references are made to his S-shaped body and his disgusting habit of picking at the foot-rot between his toes. The story shows clearly the author's sympathy for the female characters and his distaste for the hypocritical Mr. Huang.

In 'In Search of Victory' 探胜¹ the head of a household, Mr. Song 宋老爷, accompanied by his two children and their nanny 王妈 visit West Lake in Hangzhou. From time to time during the outing Mr. Song casts appreciative glances in Wang Ma's direction and even takes an opportunity to squeeze her thigh when the bus they are travelling on suddenly lurches. Mr. Song's wife is not due to arrive for several days and it is clear that his intentions towards Wang Ma are not at all honourable. Wang Ma does nothing to encourage him and looks balefully at him whenever his back is turned. She obtains some measure of consolation when Mr. Song's daughter refuses to play with him, holding firmly

¹ Da gong bao wenyi 156 (3. 6. 1936)

onto Wang Ma's hand. Wang Ma cannot help herself laughing and this infuriates Mr. Song. Finding his designs on Wang Ma thwarted, Mr. Song becomes increasingly bad-tempered even to the point where he swears at Wang Ma. During the course of the story Mr. Song's attitude towards Wang Ma changes from being patronising and would-be exploitative to abusive and oppressive. Throughout the story the reader is privy to Mr. Song's inner thoughts as these are revealed directly by the third-person narrative method. The narrator also takes pains to inform the reader of the difference in status and background of Mr. Song and Wang Ma. Mr. Song is an educated man and a public servant whereas Wang Ma is no more than a relatively ignorant country girl. At first, Mr. Song thinks to take advantage of this country girl whom he imagines he can seduce with his clever talk and social position. Finding that this cuts no ice with Wang Ma his attitude changes to one of abusive contempt. Thus in this story Zhang manages to combine at a stroke the exploitation of women by men and the superior attitude of educated city folk towards people from the countryside.

'A Midsummer Night's Dream' 夏夜夢¹ also describes the exploitation of women, but unlike 'In Search of Victory' the characters in the story are city dwellers. This story is most interesting because it is told mainly from the viewpoint of a sixteen-year-old girl Xiao Yunfang 筱芸芳 who is a professional singer. Her dream is to escape her miserable existence and find her father or go to school. The story describes the cruelty with which her foster mother treats her: abusing her verbally and physically. She is befriended by a Mr. Ma who unable to afford the price put on Xiao Yunfang by her foster-mother, suggests they run away together. When her foster-mother discovers this plan she has some friends drive Mr. Ma away with threats and beats Xiao Yunfang viciously. Seemingly Xiao Yunfang's one chance of escaping her cruel lot has been lost and the reassertion of the old order at the end of the story recalling the opening of the story gives the suggestion that life will go on as before for Xiao Yunfang. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

1 Attributed to the year 1936 in Zhang Tianyi duanpian xiaoshuo xuanji, xiace, 638; and according to Zhang Tianyi wenxue pinglunji, 693, this story was completed in the winter of 1936 but not published until 4. 1939.

implies that in times of economic hardship, as in the mid-1930s in China, young girls are forced into a life of near-slavery from which in spite of their misery and desperation they are unable to escape. Mr. Ma tells Xiao Yunfang that what her foster-mother is doing is against the law and her foster-mother could be reported to the police. Despite this, the foster-mother continues to run her household unhindered by the forces of the law.

The method Zhang uses to achieve his purpose in this story is the third-person narrative method, but rather than distancing his material, he makes use of a reflective formula in order to reveal the thoughts of Xiao Yunfang directly to the reader, as for example:

"Why doesn't he say something?", she thought.

(“他干么不言语了呢?”她想。)

The reader is also privy to Xiao Yunfang's dreams of a better life, the ability to dream being the one ray of hope left in Xiao Yunfang's unremittingly hopeless life at the end of the story.

It is also interesting to note that when the foster-mother takes Xiao Yunfang to her room, locks the door and closes the window, the narrative viewpoint then shifts to outside this room. The beating is then heard by those outside rather than being experienced at first hand by Xiao Yunfang. This recalls the beating of Ge Ping in 'From Emptiness to Fullness' and Zhang uses a not dissimilar method to describe the bedroom scenes in 'Smile' and 'A Honey-flavoured Night'.

Another story about the role of women in contemporary society is 'Mate' 侣伴¹ which dispels the myth that the female party in any heterosexual liaison is necessarily the more ineffectual partner. 'Mate' describes a young couple, Huang Monan 黄摩南 and Du Yunnan 杜韵南. Du Yunnan, the wife, is a school-teacher and breadwinner. Huang Monan is a man of the educated class but has no regular employment. He affects to look down

¹ Wen ji yuekan 1:4 (1. 9. 1936)

upon his neighbours who work in the service of the government but fritters away his own time, by going to the teahouse or the restaurant. In an effort to dispel her husband's maudlin feelings of inferiority, the wife encourages him to do some translation work, but even in this he fails, as usual finding an excuse not to settle down to the work.

Du Yunnan comes across as by far the more robust of the two characters and like Ren san sao in 'Back and Breasts' provides another example of a strong female character in Zhang's works.

Stories describing ineffective attempts to scale the social ladder: 'Friendship' and 'Inviting Guests'.

'Friendship' 友谊¹ and 'Inviting Guests' 请客² are two more treatments of a theme to be found in Zhang's earlier stories and novels: unsuccessful attempts to improve one's position in society. 'Friendship' describes how a couple bent on bettering themselves attempt to ingratiate themselves with a young man whose half-brother is in a position of influence. The wife even goes as far as to make advances to the young man, but it finally transpires that the young man has no influence with his half-brother. In speaking ill of his half-brother, however, the young man gives the husband an idea of how he might be able to blackmail this powerful man. Although the story ends at this point and it is unclear to the reader whether this method of seeking advancement might or might not prove successful, the couple portrayed in 'Friendship' appear more resourceful than the hapless seekers of advancement in stories like 'The Leather Belt' and the subsequent 'Lu Baotian' 陆宝田³.

'Inviting Guests' on the other hand possesses all the hallmarks of previous treatments of this theme, even to the point that the unsuccessful aspirant collapses beaten and dejected at the end

1 Wenxue 5:3 (1. 9. 1935)

2 First published in the collection Tuanyuan 《团圆》, Shanghai Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 12. 1935.

3 Wen cong 1:1 (20. 3. 1937)

of the story like Old Mr. Bao at the end of 'The Bao Family, Father and Son'. There is no marked difference in style or presentation between 'Inviting Guests' and other stories of this type.

Complex stories describing hierarchical levelling:

'On the Journey' and 'Being Reasonable'.

'On the Journey' 旅途中¹ is an amusing story describing a train journey; four travellers share a goods wagon because the scheduled train has been badly delayed. Two of them are country folk and the other two appear to be gentlemen. When Mr. Ji 计三爷, a man of some notoriety in the district, boards the train, the two country fellows are already there and he treats them with disdain and condescension, also making use of one of their bundles to sit on and scrounging a drink of water from their thermos. In spite of Mr. Ji's supercilious and contemptuous attitude the two country folk do not vent their anger and frustration. Just as the train is about to leave the station another passenger enters the wagon. It is an elderly gentleman with a beard. Mr. Ji sizes up this new arrival and comes to the conclusion that this man has no more lofty a social position than he has himself. He thinks to engage this man in pleasant conversation but the man takes no notice of Mr. Ji. Instead and much to Mr. Ji's irritation the newcomer engages the two country bumpkins easily and naturally in conversation without exhibiting a trace of superciliousness. Losing all respect for his new travelling companion Ji stretches his legs and allows his dirty shoe to graze the trouser leg of the old gentleman. Ji is tolerated for a time but is eventually told to keep his feet to himself. Feeling that Ji has finally met his match one of the country folk complains that Ji is crushing his almanac which is in the bag on which Ji is sitting. When Ji ignores the country fellow, the old man loses his temper and reproaches Ji for his discourteous and patronising attitude towards country folk. Ji leaps up and asks to know the old man's name. He turns out to be a famous general called Chen Jiyu 陈季渔. Ji is

¹ Wenxue jikan 2:4 (16. 12. 1935)

most distressed by his faux-pas and General Chen makes him wriggle with discomfiture by upbraiding him in front of the two country fellows much to their amusement. The general gets off the train the stop before Ji and the two country fellows. Ji sets about exacting his revenge as soon as Chen has gone. He kicks them about, slaps one of them on the face and swears at them.

The story is most interesting because it presents a complex view of society. Unlike many of the earlier stories which are clearcut examples of exploitation of the weak by the strong, in this story the bully Ji is called to order and belittled by someone who is his superior in status and power. There is also the suggestion that for Ji and his likes the days are numbered, for General Chen says: "... — there will come a day — humph, when the laws of the nation and social convention will no longer tolerate people like you! You wait and see!" But at the end of the story Ji quickly regains his composure and resumes his bullying manner towards his social inferiors.

'Being Reasonable' 讲理¹ like 'On the Journey' presents a complex view of society. A young child defecates on the doorstep of a shop. The shopkeeper is much incensed but the mother of the child immediately arrives on the scene and begins to argue her child's case. The woman is of strong-willed temperament and makes her point forcefully. The shopkeeper is no match for her quick tongued wit and is easily cowed. The mother claims that the proprietor is denying her child the right to defecate. He protests lamely that he does not deny the child's right to defecate merely the child's choice of location for defecation. Finally a policeman arrives on the scene and after the lady has left he tells the shopkeeper to clean up his front step.

The narrator does not take sides in the dispute, adopting the same standpoint as the bystanders who come to observe the goings-on. The story is mainly a record of the conversation between the lady and the shopkeeper. The narrator does however supply one piece of gratuitous information to the reader and that is that this

¹ Dagongbao wenyi (1. 1. 1936)

lady is in fact a wealthy property-owner who rents out properties in the neighbourhood. The shopkeeper appears to be unaware of this aspect of her identity. Whether the child has been told to defecate on the shop step or whether it is merely an uncontrollable accident is not made clear.

The point of the story would seem to be the topsyturvy nature of authority and power. The shopkeeper is no match for the rich lady and the policeman too would not dare to take her to task, preferring to use his authority to silence the shopkeeper and instruct him to clear up the mess on his doorstep. Once again this is a story in which the strongest and most powerful character is a woman.¹

Stories that portray attitudes towards the anti-Japanese resistance: 'Bearded Bei', 'Warmonger' and 'Untitled Story'.

A number of Zhang's stories published in 1936 make reference to efforts to resist the Japanese. 'Bearded Bei' 貝胡子² describes the reaction of two old men to attempts to seek contributions from them to aid the cause of resistance to the Japanese. Bearded Bei and his old friend Zhong qi laoguan 钟七老官 do their utmost to avoid making any contribution. Bearded Bei is most adamant in his rejection of the need to make a contribution:

"They — they are afraid China will not be vanquished, so they deliberately make a bit of a fuss to infuriate the foreign soldiers, I know"

He paused, and using all his strength — he tossed out his conclusion:

"This — this — is to be a traitor!"

(「...他们——生怕中国不亡,特为闹
桌子祸事来招惹洋兵,我晓得的...」
停了停,他用全身的力气——迸出
了一个结论:

¹ See above references to 'Back and Breasts' and 'Mate'.

² Wenji yuekan 1:2(1. 7. 1936)

「这——这——就是汉奸！」)

The thought that their names may appear in the newspaper at last encourages the two old men to make the smallest of contributions, but when they are told that there will be no mention in the newspaper because the soliciting of contributions for this cause is against the law, Bearded Bei's mind is made up:

"So I won't do it, I won't do it! I am not one to do things prohibited by the law, I'm a good fellow. I have lived to be almost sixty — and now you want me to break the law? I won't do it!"

'Warmonger' 主战者¹ is a story in similar vein describing the reaction of a bourgeois household living in the countryside to the possibility that the Chinese forces are about to engage the Japanese. The head of the household first hears rumours to this effect on his visit to the teahouse. He contemptuously dismisses the possibility but is shaken when his son returns home from school with a similar rumour. Losing his former self-assurance the father forbids his son to return to school until he has made further detailed enquiries. Whilst he is out of the house his wife gets out packing cases in preparation for a sudden flight to Yunnan 云南 or Guizhou 贵州. When the husband returns his former complacent attitude has been restored and he claims that there is no real substance to the rumours.

Zhang pokes fun at the head of the household by revealing his nervousness at the thought of an armed confrontation with the Japanese instead of the passive resistance he prefers:

"Are they really going to fight after all?" he muttered. Previously there had been not the slightest hint of action, so he hadn't really thought about these events having anything to do with him personally. But now — what was he going to do?

¹ Zhongliu 1:1 (5. 9. 1936).

(「怎么竟会要打呢?....」他喃喃着。以前没有一点要动手的影子,他就想也没想到过这些来跟他有切身的关系。可是如今——叫他怎么办呢?)

In both 'Bearded Bei' and 'Warmonger' Zhang reveals the deep-rooted self-interest of the characters that he portrays. Bearded Bei is preoccupied with avoiding any unnecessary expense whilst Zheng Tuian 郑退庵, the head of the household in 'Warmonger', is worried about what would happen to his rural property if he and his family were forced to flee.

'Untitled Story' 失题的故事¹ also describes reactions to the Japanese incursions on Chinese territory. In this case the situation is a primary school and the viewpoint is that of the schoolchildren. The story which is divided into nine numbered sections is deliberately written in a childish fashion, using short and simple sentences, many exclamations and a limited vocabulary. There is discord within the school even amongst the teachers, with some teachers advocating passive resistance whilst others advocate active resistance to the Japanese. The story is told from the viewpoint of the children who feel that the Japanese should be actively opposed. At the end of the story, however, those who propose passive acceptance of the Japanese occupation appear to have the upper hand. After a group of Japanese at the instigation of a Chinese informant inspect the school and discover anti-Japanese slogans in the toilet they order the school to be closed down. However, those who are resolutely opposed to the Japanese invaders resolve to keep together and go together to a new school, deliberately excluding those teachers and schoolchildren who advocate passive submission to Japanese rule.

By writing the story from the narrative viewpoint of the belligerent schoolchildren, Zhang was able to make the issue of resistance to the Japanese appear clearcut, because young children see things in black and white allowing no room for grey ambiguity.

¹ Zuojia 1:6 (15. 9. 1936)

Homage to Lu Xun: 'Magnanimity'.

'Magnanimity' 度量¹ portrays an incident involving a rickshaw puller and his passenger which calls to mind a story in Lu Xun's collection of short stories Nahan 《呐喊》², namely 'A Little Incident' 一件小事. Although stories and novels involving rickshaw pullers were commonplace in China in the 1920s and 1930s, Zhang appears in 'Magnanimity' to have had Lu Xun's story consciously in mind. In Lu Xun's story the rickshaw puller swerves to avoid an elderly woman who runs into his path only to catch part of her unbuttoned jacket on his handle thus pulling her to the ground. In Zhang's 'Magnanimity' the rickshaw puller narrowly avoids a collision with someone who runs into his path only to be forced off the road a little later by a passing car. Both stories are set in the winter and have urban backgrounds.

According to the narrator of 'A Little Incident' the events described happened in the winter of 1917 民国六年的冬天. Zhang's story was first published in November, 1935 and presumably described events that happened at most some eighteen years on. Not only does the atmosphere surrounding events differ but also the viewpoint from which the story is told. Lu Xun used a highly personalised first-person narrative technique which gives the impression to the reader that the experience described is at least semi-autobiographical. Zhang on the other hand distances himself from his account by using a third person narrative technique and the viewpoint flits between the passenger, the rickshaw puller and the witnesses to the accident.

What is most interesting to compare is the differing attitudes of the passengers and the rickshaw pullers in the two stories. Zhang's passenger is inconsiderate, ignoring the enquiries of the rickshaw puller as to the exact location of his destination and waxing gleeful when he avoids paying for his interrupted journey. The passenger in Lu Xun's story first exhibits impatience because he feels his puller is unnecessarily considerate in escorting the old lady to a police station and then subsequently he feels

1 Da gong bao wenyi 40 (10. 11. 1935).

2 Beijing:Beixin shuju 北京北新书局, 1926.

remorse at his earlier attitude and in an involuntary attempt to make amends he heaps a handful of coins into the hand of a policeman and asks him to give them to the rickshaw puller. Zhang's rickshaw puller is free with his curses and after being driven off the road, his first concern is whether there is any damage to his rickshaw. He suffers some injuries in the accident cutting his hand and grazing his leg. Lu Xun's rickshaw puller shows immediate and overriding concern for the person he has knocked down. Neither of the two rickshaw pullers show concern for their passengers.

Whereas Lu Xun's story is highly reflective with several rhetorical questions being asked by the first-person narrator, Zhang contrives to describe an incident that provokes conflicting attitudes in the minds of bystanders. The initial response of an old man who witnesses the accident is that the rickshaw puller has only himself to blame for not taking more care. Almost as though prompting the reader to think back to Lu Xun's story, Zhang describes how a primary school student calls out: "Go to the police, go to the police!" before scampering off. Although the consensus of opinion amongst the bystanders appears to be that the rickshaw puller should bear the blame, "... A few mouths started to urge that gentleman [the passenger]. Certainly the rickshaw puller has been careless, but he has been injured, which counts as a kind of punishment. Forget the matter, there is not much point in taking the trouble to go to the police." When the passenger walks off having declared his intention not to pay, the crowd congratulate the rickshaw puller on his good fortune: "Your luck was in, coming across such a gentleman as this -- very magnanimous. If it had been someone else -- just you see!" Unbeknown to the bystanders, however, but shared secretly by the narrator with the reader is the following enlightening information about the 'magnanimous' passenger:

A smile flickered for a moment at the corners of his mouth:

"If it were like this every trip I made by rickshaw, that would be fine."

Lu Xun used a simple but effective method to describe events in 'A Little Incident' but Zhang took a very similar incident in 'Magnanimity' and by using a more sophisticated narrative method — the roving third-person narrative viewpoint — produced a complex story incorporating satirical and sociological facets not to be found in Lu Xun's work. In this particular case it can be said that the disciple outstripped the master.

An insight into the storyteller's craft: 'A Story Line'.

'A Story Line' — 一个题材¹ is unusual because rather than telling a conventional story it gives an account of the process of gathering material for a story. It is an indication of Zhang's confidence in his ability as a writer of short stories at this time that he chose to write such an unconventional work. As would be expected Zhang makes use of the highly personal first-person narrative technique. An elderly and very distant relative of the writer/narrator comes to visit him on one of his visits to his family home. The old lady has heard that he earns a living by his pen and hopes to persuade him to write a story about her. The writer/narrator respectfully points out that her request is not as straightforward as she might think. In order to write a story he needs a story-line. Disappointed, the old lady asks why some incident in her past will not do and begins to go over her past experiences which the narrator already knows well. In the hope of extracting some particularly interesting and unexpected morsel of experience from the old lady's past, he coaxes her into revealing something of her amorous experiences. Reluctantly the old lady tells of an affair with an influential benefactor who came to her aid some time after her husband's death. Feeling that she has perhaps revealed too much the old lady hurriedly takes her leave without going into details about her affair and amusingly implores the writer/narrator not to tell anyone else about what she has just told him.

By using the first person narrative technique, Zhang was able

¹ Zhongxuesheng 64 (1. 4. 1936).

to focus on the behaviour of the writer/narrator. Thus the reader is aware of the writer/narrator's uneasiness, his physical discomfort when the old lady's bad breath becomes too offensive on the occasions she imparts confidences and his careful and deliberate extraction of as much interesting information from the old lady as possible. Zhang lays bare the wiles available to an author wishing to draw forth from his interlocutor the seeds of an idea that will subsequently be used to make a fictional story. The apparent casualness of the writer/narrator in 'A Story Line' disguises cultivated calculation, an example of which is his attempt to put the old lady at her ease and increase the illusion of confidentiality by closing the door and the window of the room in which they are sitting.

Zhang's other works of fiction published in 1935 and 1936.

Other works which Zhang published in 1935 and 1936 do not distinguish themselves from the main stream of his fictional oeuvres. They include 'A Strange Place' 奇怪的地方¹ and 'Great King Baldy' 秃秃大王², both highly moralistic works for children, the former describing the social divide between poor and rich children, the latter attempting didactic exposure of capitalism and imperialism. They also include 'Having a Photograph taken' 照相³, little more than an anecdote dedicated to Zhang's old friend and fellow writer Jiang Muliang and his wife, and 'Pursuit' 追⁴, a conventional treatment of the generation gap reminiscent of 'The Bao Family, Father and Son'.

Zhang's literary critical works published in 1935 and 1936.

Zhang's most important work of literary criticism published in 1935-1936 was 'The story of my writing career'⁵ which has already

1 Wen ji yuekan 1:1 (1. 6. 1936).

2 Shanghai: Xinghua shuju 兴华书局, 1936.

3 Guo wen zhoubao 13:3 (13. 1. 1936).

4 Xianshi wenxue 1:1 (1. 7. 1936).

5 Written in April 1933, but not published until 1935 by Shanghai: Tianma shudian 天马书店.

been discussed above on pp. 190-193. Of Zhang's other works 'Lamenting the death of Mr. Lu Xun' 哀悼鲁迅先生¹ and 'What sort of person was Mr. Lu Xun?' 鲁迅先生是怎样的人² are conventional paeons of praise for Lu Xun written shortly after the master's death and merely serve to confirm Zhang's credentials as a member of Lu Xun's camp.

Of Zhang's other critical works written during this period, three stand out: 'What are meant by the "content" and "form" of literary works? Is it form that determines content? Or content that determines form?' 什么叫做文学作品的“内容”和“形式”?是形式决定内容的呢?还是内容决定形式?³; 'How I wrote "Qingming Festival"' 我怎样写《清明时节》的⁴; and 'What is humour?' 什么是幽默?⁵

The first of these three works in spite of its wordy title is a fairly concise account of a few of Zhang's ideas on literary theory. Zhang makes no secret of his belief that writers are engaged in a didactic process:

In a literary work the writer is always trying to tell us something, he has his attitude towards the world, he has his views, and based on these, he makes use of what he writes to explain his opinions, and make us believe his opinions. We are moved when we read his work, and involuntarily we go along with him and change our ideas, ...

Apart from teaching and instructing the reader, Zhang also believed that the author should please the reader:

Literary works should make us feel moved, and because of this, when we write we must use a particular method, a particular technique, a distinctive style.

1 Zhongliu 1:5 (5. 11. 1936)

2 Xin shaonian 2:9 (10. 11. 1936)

3 In Wenxue baiti 《文学百题》, Shanghai: Shenghuo shudian 生活书店. 7. 1935.

4 Wenxue 6:1 (1. 1. 1936)

5 Ye ying 1:3 (10. 5. 1936)

He is dogmatic that content decides form and is merciless in his derision of those who think the opposite.

As far as the creative process is concerned, Zhang declares:

A writer's attitude towards the world determines his content, so where does this attitude come from?

It comes from his life, and is nurtured from the culture of the age in which he lives.

Zhang goes on to describe what happens when times change and writers become passé:

Their lives go mouldy, and gradually rot, until they become vacant. Their attitudes towards the world become mistaken, become confused, until they no longer dare to look the world squarely in the eye. Thus their works obviously have lost their content because the organ that produces content has already started to rust, and is rotten.

Zhang's opinions as they appear in this article are forthrightly expressed and are entirely consonant with what one would expect of a writer of the realist school. He avoids any controversial questions of literary theory.

'What is humour?' like the previously discussed work would appear to have been commissioned by the League of Left-wing Writers. It was to have appeared in a collection of essays by leftist writers, including Lu Xun and Mao Dun, but like several other of the essays listed in the table of contents of One Hundred Literary Topics 《文学百题》, Zhang's essay was excluded by the Nationalist censors before publication was allowed to go ahead. It did not appear in print until almost a year later in the magazine Ye ying. 'What is humour?' takes the form of an interview, and is recorded as a dialogue between Zhang and an unnamed journalist. Zhang fields questions on the following literary terms: 'humour' 幽默; 'comedy' 滑稽; 'wit' 味特; and 'satire' 讽刺. Zhang linked 'satire' with 'humour' but confined most of his remarks to

discussing 'humour'. In answer to the journalist's question, "So what about the attitude of a humorist?", Zhang answered:

"What is his attitude? He just wants to lay bare those faces that are false in this world, reveal the true aspect of those putrid faces, without adding a single word, and without criticising. His appearance is very cold, but in fact he is most concerned and most passionate about people because he loves the truth."

"态度么：他只要把世界上那些假脸子剥开，露出那烂疮的真相就算数，不再加一句话，不批评。他样子很冷静，但其实对人世最关心，最热烈，因为他爱真实。"

It is not clear whether Zhang saw himself in the role of humorist, but his linking of satire with humour suggests that he did. If this was the case, then another of Zhang's aims in writing fiction was to seek after the truth.

The most interesting of these three articles is 'How I wrote "Qingming Festival"'. Again Zhang was apparently asked to write this work, because the opening few lines of the piece mention that Zhang was asked to write a piece about how he had gone about writing one of his works. He does not say why he chose to describe the creative process surrounding the writing of 'Qingming Festival'.

As mentioned above ¹ 'Qingming Festival' was not one of Zhang's more accomplished works and he explains that it caused him considerable problems in the drafting of the manuscript going through many rewritings, revisions and excisions. In 'How I wrote "Qingming Festival"' Zhang explains that after he had decided on the basic storyline for 'Qingming Festival' he was faced with the problem of which standpoint to use and at which point in the story to begin:

I had several ideas, and I changed my manuscript several times. Once I thought I would begin writing

¹ See p. 240.

with the soldiers. Once I thought I would begin writing from the point when Mr. Cheng san makes mischief. Once I thought I would begin writing from the point when Luo er ye starts to think of seizing the Xie family's piece of burial ground because of his belief in geomancy.

But this method of writing was unsuitable for me. By writing in this way I would certainly find it impossible to present my material economically, and I would be sure to make the opening top heavy, and also include some unnecessary material.

In any case, the fewer the scenes the better. The best thing to do is find a way of squeezing it into one scene, which is written very tautly.

In this particular case it would seem that Zhang had too much material at his disposal and he found it difficult to decide what to excise. He claims that he weeded out many unnecessary incidents and some of his friends who read the manuscript recommended other deletions, but the story as it now appears in print is still very long and wordy and unsuitable for consideration as a short story.

Zhang also expresses the view that we had already deduced from the time sequence used in most of Zhang's earlier stories, that a forward-moving time sequence is better than an inverted sequence when telling a story. (.... "倒叙"不如"顺叙".) Zhang's use of disjointed and inverted time sequences in his fiction is rare.

Zhang also takes the opportunity in 'How I wrote "Qingming Festival"' to make some general comments on literary creativity:

Writing seems to have a definite method, but at the same time it seems to have no method at all. The faces of characters are changed several times, and the structure is changed several times. One writes for a while and then throws it away, and then starts writing again. Sometimes one has to think very hard. Sometimes one feels euphoric. Sometimes one suddenly changes one's

plan in the middle, and tears up in one go all that one has written.

Here Zhang draws attention to the paradox of writing short stories: conscious artifice is hidden behind the facade of casual arrangement.

Conclusion.

By 1935, Zhang's literary creative activity had reached a plateau. He had established himself as a respected and accomplished writer of modern short stories and his style of writing showed self-assurance. The stories which he wrote in 1935 and 1936, with the exception of one or two extraordinary stories which merited detailed analysis in the preceding pages,¹ followed the patterns that had proved successful in the years preceding 1935.

In 1937 and 1938 Zhang was to turn his attention increasingly to writing literary criticism and theory, giving credence to the probability that he had reached that stage in a writer's development described as follows by Sean O'Faolain:

There are writers whose 'simple, natural self' carries them a long way; to their thirties even. It is ultimately and inevitably overlaid, or it betrays the man. That period when a man is approaching forty is the dreadful test period for all artists. If they have prepared for it; if they have developed, if they have won resilience they will move into a new phase, and perhaps then go on to the end still creative. Otherwise they repeat themselves, mechanically, or stop.²

1 See above pp. 259-262.

2 O'Faolain, The Short Story, 33.

As we shall see in the following chapter, Zhang appeared to be moving into 'a new phase' with the publication of 'Mr. Hua Wei', but the notoriety and mixed critical reception that the story provoked had an adverse effect on Zhang's development and this coupled with the onset of tuberculosis caused him to repeat 'Duck Empire' 金鸭帝国 and unfinished 'Golden Duck Empire' 金鸭帝国 and then stop writing fiction altogether during his illness and the period of his recuperation.

Chapter Six

The Final Stage of Zhang's Literary Development (1937-1957)

Introduction

The final stage of Zhang's literary development spanned the years 1937 to 1957, and it was during this period that Zhang wrote and published 'Mr. Hua Wei' 华威先生¹ a work which brought him both notoriety and fame. On the strength of 'Mr. Hua Wei' this final stage of Zhang's literary development has a right to the claim that it marks the zenith of Zhang's literary career. It shall be one of my tasks in this chapter to consider whether 'Mr. Hua Wei' merits its critical acclaim and to consider how it compares with and relates to Zhang's earlier works of distinction.

Zhang's literary development between 1937 and 1957 can most fittingly be divided into three periods: the years 1937 to 1942, a period when Zhang was actively involved in the war of resistance to the Japanese and a period during which he wrote 'Mr. Hua Wei' and two other stories inspired by the events of the times (which were later published together in the collection Suxie sanpian 《速写三篇》), as well as two novels In the City 《在城市里》 and Golden Duck Empire 《金鸭帝国》, a booklength work of literary criticism entitled The Description of Characters 《谈人物描写》, together with several short stories and short works of literary criticism; the years 1942 to 1951, when Zhang became too ill with tuberculosis to carry on with his writing and including the long period of his recuperation; the years 1952 to 1957 during which Zhang, now sufficiently recuperated to be employed in various executive capacities of the newly formed Chinese Writers' Union 中国作家协会, wrote a number of works for children on which his contemporary reputation within China is in large part based.

1 Wenyi zhendi 1:1 (16. 4. 1938).

1. Zhang's 'pièces de résistance' (1937-1942)

'Lu Baotian' and 'People from the Same Home Town' - studies in character.

Zhang's first story to appear in 1937 was 'Lu Baotian' 陆宝田¹ and it marked the beginning of a trend in Zhang's creative development towards a situation where the main character in a short story was of greater importance than the story itself. This trend finally gained literary critical expression in Zhang's long critical treatise 'The Description of Characters'.

'Lu Baotian' is not only characteristic of this trend but also has some of the characteristics to be found in Zhang's earlier fiction. (Because it simultaneously exhibits facets of the trends to be found in the middle and late periods of Zhang's creative development, 'Lu Baotian' can be regarded as a bridging work.) The character Lu Baotian is similar to many of the other poor, powerless individuals that people Zhang's 1932-1936 stories. Like Bai Muyi at one point in the novel One Year, Lu Baotian works as a copy-clerk in an office. Lu Baotian's preoccupation with ingratiating himself with his superiors can even be traced back to 'The Leather Belt'² of Zhang's early period though perhaps its closest parallel is to be found in 'Inviting Guests'³.

The comedy of the story is decidedly black; Lu Baotian's efforts to become pally with his superiors are the ultimate cause of his ruin. In the end, Lu's foolhardy acts of bravado -- drinking when he is not used to it, gambling his salary away at mahjong when he shows no aptitude for the game, and riding a horse when he does not know how to -- achieve the diametric opposite of his intention, for at the end of the story he lies helpless on his sickbed (having been thrown by his steed) and he has lost his job. These acts of bravado which

1 Wencong 1:1 (20. 3. 1937).

2 Qingnian jie 1:5 (10. 7. 1931).

3 In Tuanyuan 《团园》, Shanghai, Wenhua shenghuo shudian (12. 1935).

in another context would be uproariously funny take on a sinister complexion when viewed against the backcloth of Lu's superiors and colleagues gleefully encouraging and leading him along the path to ruin. The sadistic pleasure that they take in watching Lu Baotian coughing his heart out after they have forced a cigarette upon him is particularly unpleasant.

This aspect of the story does not however result in Lu Baotian coming across as an endearing character. With the exception of Lu's long-suffering wife and his kind-hearted, solicitous colleague Ling datou 凌大头 none of the characters appear sympathetic.

Where 'Lu Baotian' differs from its precursors -- the sections describing Bai Muyi's career as a copy-clerk in One Year, 'The Leather Belt' and 'Inviting Guests' -- is in its concentration on the character of Lu Baotian. Whereas in Zhang's earlier short stories -- which are on the whole significantly shorter than 'Lu Baotian' -- Zhang was happy to describe caricatures rather than rounded characters, picking on an idiosyncrasy or habitual gesture and repeatedly referring to it throughout the story, there is evidence that Zhang made a deliberate effort to produce a more complete picture of Lu Baotian's character. Lu is at all times in the story, the centre of both the reader's and the narrator's attention. In an earlier story, attention might have been restricted to Lu's relationship with his workmates, but with the new preoccupation with character, Lu is followed home and his relationship with his family is described to further fill out the picture gained from the descriptions of Lu's interaction with his colleagues. Without this supplementary material the story could have been told much more sparsely but at the expense of a rounded portrait of the central character.

Much the same can be said of Zhang's next story 'People from the Same Home Town' 同乡们¹ whose title belies its preoccupation with the central character Changfeng dashu

¹ Wencong 1:3 (15. 5. 1937).

长丰大叔。 Like 'Lu Baotian' this is quite a long story — it runs to 28 quite large pages in the magazine Wencong — and fixes attention on one unendearing character.

Changfeng dashu is one of several migrant workers who have left their home town in search of employment. Together they form a gang of 'lump' labour and at the time the story takes place they are working on riverside boat repairs. Paid at piecework rates for their work on the boats they are all with the exception of Changfeng dashu desperately short of money. With hardly enough to live on themselves, those with dependants left behind in their home town are in particularly desperate straits. One such worker Hua laojiu 华老九 borrows ten dollars from Changfeng dashu to send to his wife. The story hinges on Hua laojiu's need to repay this loan with interest, and describes in some detail the complex emotions that rack Changfeng dashu. He is torn by conflicting emotions; on the one hand he has feelings of affection, camaraderie and compassion for his fellow home-towners and would like to show generosity to them; but on the other hand, he baulks at the thought of other people laying their hands on his money without doing anything to earn it.

Further insights into Changfeng dashu's background are provided to the reader which help in making his complex emotional make-up more readily comprehensible; the reader is told for instance that Changfeng dashu had a wife and child once but that they both died. His original plan had been to earn enough money to enable him to return to his hometown and buy a little land, but his wages never left him with sufficient savings to buy even a tiny parcel of land.

As the story unfolds Changfeng dashu imagines in his own mind acts of pure generosity — he fantasises about returning Hua laojiu's I.O.U. to him and fingers his bundle of money with the thought of giving some money to the pregnant wife of one of his workmates — but in the end he fails to put his imagined generosity into practice. The consequence of Changfeng dashu's

self-inflicted mental torture is loneliness and isolation. He refuses to live with the others for fear that his money will be stolen from him and chooses to live in a small uncomfortable riverside shack. His only companion is Tuobei laoguan 驼背老官, another misfit, who lives in the adjoining shack. His relationship with Tuobei laoguan mirrors his internal conflict: for every kindness that he shows the poor old hunchback, he finds it necessary to swear about Tuobei laoguan's weaknesses, as though by doing this he is effectively nullifying any kindness he may have shown.

At the end of the story Changfeng dashu is shamed when his fellow townsfolk club together to raise money by borrowing from the people of the local area (本地人) so that Hua laojiu can repay part of what he owes Changfeng dashu. But even when he is given this opportunity to return Hua laojiu his I.O.U. he fails to take it, and all that is left to him is to walk lonely and disconsolate along the muddy rain-swept riverbank.

'People from the Same Home Town' is notable mainly for its skilful treatment of the difficult question of human charity. It is clear that Changfeng dashu has some money to spare, money that more than covers his own needs and it is equally clear that amongst his fellows from the same home town are those who do not have sufficient money to meet their own needs and the needs of their dependants. In such circumstances, what should Changfeng dashu do? Should he throw his banknotes down at the feet of the needy, and allow the I.O.U. to be blown away on the wind, a scene that he pictures in his mind's eye? Or should he make strategic loans, charging interest and placing people in his debt? The portrayal of Changfeng dashu, wrestling with these moral and ethical problems, against the background of his own painful past experiences makes this story particularly convincing.

If 'Lu Baotian' and 'People from the Same Home Town' are compared with the stories of Zhang's middle period, we find that all the stories tend towards the description of a unique

backcloth which provides each story with its own distinctive and convincing setting. Where differences are to be found is in the description of character; Zhang moved away from the description of featureless or stereotypical characters in the stories of his middle period.¹ With 'Lu Baotian' and 'People from the Same Home Town' Zhang moved towards the description of unique character. He achieved this transition by concentrating less on repeated reference to idiosyncrasies and more on describing the same character in various situations, thus revealing several facets of the character's nature and producing a more rounded portrait.

Propaganda Work in the Cause of the War of Resistance to Japan.

Starting in May, 1937, Zhang wrote a number of articles of a propagandist nature, clearly intended as contributions to the patriotic resistance to the Japanese. He was intimately involved with resistance work during 1937, based part of the time in Shanghai and later in the year in Changsha. Several of his articles appeared in the magazine Zhongliu between May and July under the collective title 'Little-known works of Academe' 士林秘笈.² This series of articles takes the form of an exchange of letters between various aesthetes. A short introductory section ostensibly explains how the letters came to be assembled and published. A friend of the author [i.e. for 'author' read Zhang] set out to write a 'History of Modern Chinese Culture' 「中国现代文化史」. To this end he collected some letters and documents written by learned men 文人 "not only meaning literary men, but also including cultured men" (「.... 不仅是指文艺人, 连文化人也在内的。」) Having obtained this material, he could not decide how best to present it. He was also

1 Lao Bao in 'The Bao Family, Father and Son' is an example of a featureless character; although he has an important part to play in the story, he does not come to life for the reader because interest is limited to his plot-related activities. Stereotypical characters like Jiu ye in 'Smile' and Zhangtaiye in 'Back and Breasts' are often to be found sharing the stage with other more or less robust characters.

2 Zhongliu 2:4 (5. 5. 1937); 2:5 (20. 5. 1937); 2:8 (5. 7. 1937).

besieged by doubts about the correct use of terminology and whether or not to discuss political economy and the age as integral parts of his cultural history. Finally unable to reach a decision, he gave his material to Zhang who simply copied some of the letters and sent them to the publisher. Each letter is preceded by a caption explaining by whom the letter is written and to whom it is addressed. The first letter is from an essayist to his nephews explaining how to write essays 小品文. The other letters are written by a painter to his patron, an antiquarian to his children offering advice on how to read the Classics, a youth to his tutor on the subject of aesthetics, and a reply from the tutor to a letter from the youth. There are also three poems on the subject of "A pork butcher's shop" 猪肉店. All of the letters as well as the three poems fulfil a satiric purpose. Zhang holds up the purported correspondence of aesthetes to ridicule by giving the casual observer the impression that the bastions of culture in China condemn themselves out of their own mouths. Each letter (and each poem) is written in its own distinctive style. The skill with which Zhang manages to capture and imitate the essential characteristics of a wide range of prose styles reflects his equally skilful capturing of speech patterns and dialect in his short stories and novels. In these letters, as often in his works of fiction, Zhang seizes on distinctive characteristics and exaggerates them in order to achieve his satirical effect. In the youth's letter to his tutor, for instance, Zhang seizes on the youth's naivety and puzzlement:

Seven [The points in his letter are numbered],
 The first time Northerners see West Lake 西湖,
 it can make even a country fellow lacking in appreciation
 of beauty amazed by this extraordinary sight. These
 words were taught us by our teacher. Accordingly last
 spring, I invited a farmer from the countryside in
 North China to come to Hangzhou to appreciate the place.
 Before the event I did not tell him what was going to
 happen, merely saying that this trip would be to his
 advantage. My not telling him was with the idea of
 giving him a 'surprise'. Who could have predicted that
 when we were on the boat on West Lake, he would fix me

with a stare and ask: "Why did you ask me to come here? Hurry up and tell me". I said: "I invited you here to appreciate the place. Oh, how beautiful it is! This stretch of radiant and enchanting" The upshot was he beat me up, and even wanted to drag me to the police station to have me charged. He kept saying that I had deceived him, and had wasted his harvesting time. How ought I to behave to this kind of person?

The satire and humour of the passage above lies in the exaggeration of the young man's naivety. Its capacity to amuse (i.e. make the reader laugh) is combined with its capacity to instruct (i.e. make the reader recognise the inappropriateness of intellectual concerns to workers on the land).

The main aim of Zhang's satirical thrust in the various letters is to draw attention to the meaninglessness of intellectual discourse at a time of national emergency. The uselessness and even the detrimental nature of some intellectuals' attitudes towards the patriotic resistance to the Japanese is drawn attention to at several points in the letters. Again, quoting the letter of the young man to his mentor, the young man refers to a friend who said:

".... Even when our country is lost, we can still appreciate beauty. And simply by appreciating beauty, we can forget the sorrow of losing our country. In short, we can't let vulgar concerns worry us!"

What he says makes a lot of sense. And yet when one looks at the reports in the newspaper one finds that a lot of intellectuals have been killed by the enemy in the occupied territories of the North-east. Amongst their number there must have been a lot of vulgar people. And yet the enemy cannot distinguish between us, being unable to pick out those who are vulgar and those who are cultivated. That friend of mine also said: "If you are afraid, it is best to

become a traitor. For the sake of beauty, there is no harm in doing such a thing". What he says is of course a joke, because to be a traitor is also a vulgar act.

In the letter of the essayist to his nephews we find:

If one gets hold of a library, a few antiques, and one burns some incense, brews some tea, reads a few pages of an essay by a Ming writer, and dashes off a composition, that is the way to be a man. What does the so-called present day have to do with me? The bombs let off by foreigners have never yet reached my library, nor has my home town suffered drought or flood¹

The writers of the letters, who would all seem to be educated men, range from the nonchalant to the dangerous, but their one common characteristic is their detachment from reality, their ivory-towerism.

In amongst the empty verbiage about aesthetics there are a few remarks about the function of literature in contemporary society. In the professor's reply to the young man, for instance, he characterises the young man's literary standpoint thus:

You are opposed to the advocacy of 'Literature and Art for Literature and Art's Sake', because this is an unhealthy kind of literary standpoint, but you are even more virulently opposed to that kind of utilitarian 'Literature is for conveying truth' type of writing by which literature and art serve humanity. The arts are supposedly 'for the masses', 'for revolution', 'for class consciousness', and even 'for National Defence!' you say sarcastically.

Young people might ask: "So, what literary stance do you want us to embrace?"

¹ This is perhaps a jibe at Zhou Zuoren.

In fact I understand your meaning perfectly.

Previously you believed that art's source lay in games, that beauty and practicality were not associated, and that it is all undirected. This is an 'Art for Art's Sake' attitude. The reason why you adopted this attitude, and naturally you have agonised over it, was the thought of extracting young people from such vulgar things as writing 'for the masses, for revolution, for class consciousness and even for National Defence'.

In this way Zhang holds up the attitudes of some of his contemporaries to ridicule without actually making categorical statements about his own philosophy. Zhang's views on the function of literature and art in a society at war are not to be gleaned from the letters that comprise 'Little-known works of Academe' except in so far as he can be expected to have held views other than those he ridiculed.

Unfortunately I have not been lucky enough to see the articles that Zhang is known to have written later in 1937, namely 'Not to mention it' 不 题 起, ¹ 'War and Peace' 战 与 和 ² and 'The War of Resistance and the masses' 抗 战 与 民 众, ³ which from their titles at least would seem to indicate the use of a direct and possibly didactic approach.

One other significant aspect of 'Little-known works of Academe' is Zhang's satire of modern poetry. The section entitled 'Three poets each write a poem on the subject of "A Pork Butcher's Shop"' 三 位 诗 人 以 「猪 肉 店」 为 题 各 写 一 首 calls to mind Zhang's earliest work 'New Poetry' 新 诗 ⁴ which also made fun of attempts to write poetry in the modern style. Poet A refuses to write

1 Libao (27. 7. 1937).

2 Zhongliu 2:10 (5. 8. 1937).

3 Guo wen zhoubao 14:33, 35 (1937).

4 Libai liu 156 (8. 4. 1922).

a poem and explains at length that he is firmly opposed to such a subject as "A Pork Butcher's Shop". Poet B writes a short poem, seemingly influenced by symbolism, that has very little to do with the subject at hand:

I wander about in the middle of the street market
 Like a solitary black thread
 Life's wings beat their way into the palace of dreams
 Is it not the door of the shop that has changed
 into this mysterious hue?
 Light-headedly light-headedly
 But the sound of the camel's bell is once again
 like an ancient well.

(我徘徊于街市之中央
 如一孤独之青丝
 生命之翅扑进梦之宫
 是店门变幻的神秘之色呢
 飘飘然飘飘然
 但骆驼之铃声复如古井了)

In explanation and justification Poet B provides an epilogue. His wife questioned him about the meaning of his poem and he declined to answer her on the grounds that the poem's significance would be destroyed if its meaning were explained. He goes on to state his opposition to poetic conventions and rhyme, preferring to rely instead on inspiration. Poet C on the other hand produces a 6-line stanza, each line consisting of 16 characters. As with poet B's poem, this poem is not punctuated, and some of the lines run on. Its content is trivial in the extreme and what makes the poem appear even more ridiculous is the poet's metrical analysis of his poem in an epilogue, arguing that the subject matter of the poem dictates that the poem should obey a certain metrical form.

Zhang's disdainful attitude towards modern poetry does not appear to have changed during the years after he wrote 'New Poetry'. 'New Poetry' mocked the facile, monotonous nature of modern poetry whilst simultaneously poking fun at the preoccupation of stick-in-the-mud traditionalists with rhyme and strict

metrical form. 'Three poets each write a poem on the subject of "A Pork Butcher's Shop"' satirises the triviality and pretentiousness of modern poetry and ridicules the attempts of those who would justify modern poetry by making their poems obey a strict metrical arrangement.

In the City: a novel about small-town family life.

In the City 《在 城 市 里》¹ has been variously attributed to the years 1935, 1936 and 1937.² It seems most likely that the work was completed in 1936 and first published in book form in 1937. In style and plot organisation it resembles most closely Zhang's earlier novel One Year, but it does away with that work's self-conscious and indulgent narrative method, suggesting that In the City belongs to a later stage in Zhang's literary development. In the City marks a conscious attempt on Zhang's part to produce a long, concerted and serious analysis of the decline and decay of China's landed gentry, and the vehicle that he chose to provide a framework for his material was the modern novel, a form of which Zhang had earlier made unsuccessful use in writing 'A Diary of Ghostland' and One Year.

In the City describes events and personalities in two relatively well-to-do families, the Ding family 丁家 and the Tang family 唐家, in the small town called Liuzhen 柳镇 where they live. The first seven chapters serve as an introductory section giving the reader an opportunity to get to know the two households through the eyes of the newly arrived Ding Shousong 丁寿松, an elderly man from the countryside who has come to visit his more wealthy relatives in the hope of gaining preferment. Ding Shousong's weighing up of the domestic situation (the two families are linked by marriage ties) is a convenient method of filling in meaningful background material. At the end of Chapter 7, Ding Shousong is shocked

1 Shanghai, Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi 良友图书
印刷公司 (6. 1937).

2 Shen Chengkuan, 'Zhang Tianyi zhuzuo jianmu' records that the novel appeared in serialised form in the periodical Guowen zhoubao in 1936. See also below Appendix B, 'Bibliography of the Works of Zhang Tianyi', p.399.

when he discovers that a fellow-traveller on the ferry to Liuzhen with whom he had struck up an indiscreet conversation about his relatives turns out to be an honoured and respected guest of the Tang household. Fearing that he will be recognised and his indiscretions revealed he is filled with panic. Ironically his ferry-boat interlocutor, He Yunsun 何云荪, shows no sign of recognising him. This doubly ironic coincidence provides a suitable point in the novel for the narrative viewpoint to shift away from Ding Shousong who sinks into the background for much of the rest of the novel. Beginning with Chapter 8, the novel adopts its real focus, Tang Qikun 唐启昆, and his evil and underhand machinations fill much of the remaining pages. We find him attempting to sell the Tang family land secretly so that he can avoid giving a share of the property to his sister-in-law when the inevitable dividing-up of the family property comes about (his elder brother had died leaving his widow from the Ding family and their one child). We also discover that he is no less mercenary towards members of his own family. He persuaded his uncle to bury part of his inheritance in the garden for safe keeping and later dug it up and spent it while his uncle was away. On another occasion he raised money ostensibly to help his mother in her dotage but spent it instead on supporting his mistress in the provincial capital 省城 and having a holiday there himself. He even pawned his mother's jewellery to raise some money. Towards the end of the novel, agreement is reached between the Tang and Ding families to the effect that the Tang family land and the family's antiques should be sold and the proceeds divided equally between Tang Qikun and his sister-in-law. Tang Qikun and his mother hurriedly sort out the best of the family's antiques and send them off to a maternal uncle's house (at the mother's insistence, for Tang Qikun was keen to store them at his pied-à-terre in the provincial town) for safe-keeping. Tang Qikun's spirits are raised when he learns the news that He Yunsun is soon expected to return from Beijing where he has been raising money to buy the Tang family land. Tang Qikun immediately sends off a letter to the caretaker of his lands warning him of the impending sale. After a time, news comes that the peasant tenants in the countryside have gone on a rent strike, and the caretaker of the Tang family

land has disappeared, presumably murdered. To add to this misfortune, Tang Qikun finds out that He Yunsun is in financial straits and in no position to buy his land. The Tang household is increasingly besieged by demands from their creditors; Tang Qikun's mother's wrath comes down upon him for his accumulated past misdemeanours. She forbids him to leave the house and even breaks his spectacles in an attempt to immobilise him. As New Year approaches and a fresh batch of creditors are expected to call and demand that bills are settled, Tang Qikun makes his escape vowing never to return. As is his wont, he makes for the provincial capital, but there he is most unpleasantly surprised; the house where his mistress lived has been sold and she is nowhere to be found. He learns that she has run off with his 'friend' who used to manage the ricksha company in which he had a part share. Tang Qikun's share had been sold to meet his debts and even then he still owed money to the new owner of the ricksha company. Disconsolate, Tang Qikun climbs into a ricksha at the end of the novel and wonders where to go.

In the City succeeds as a sustained and full-length portrait of the decay of the urban gentry (in respect of their wealth, morals and values) and shows Zhang capable of using the novel form successfully. In the City succeeds where Zhang's earlier long works like 'A Diary of Ghostland' and One Year failed because it possesses a unity of purpose and direction that the earlier novels lack. 'A Diary of Ghostland' relies on the all-including diary entry framework which results in a hotch-potch of trivial and pertinent material. One Year, on the other hand, is uncertain of where its main focus of interest lies and breaks unhappily into anecdotal pieces with various 'heroes'. In the City also seems at first sight to have fallen into the same trap; the first seven chapters seen through the eyes of Ding Shousong ill-prepare the reader for the subsequent interest in Tang Qikun and his activities, but the novel does work if one can accept that the first seven chapters are merely scene-setting; it is to Zhang's credit that he satisfies the reader's interest in Ding Shousong by describing his downfall towards the end of the novel (Ding Shousong, after weighing up the various family rivalries, throws in his lot with Tang Qikun only

to fall foul of his patron; when he tries to return to his own family he is unmasked, given a few coins and ordered to leave; thinking to make his journey from the countryside to the town not entirely unworthwhile, he is in the process of stealing some watches from the head of the Ding household when he is caught red-handed and escorted to the police station).

Other respects in which Zhang avoids the pitfalls of his earlier attempts at writing a full-length novel, are his abandonment of the self-indulgent, larger-than-life narrator to be found in One Year, The Pulse of the Age and The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions, and his decision to write an adult story for an adult audience. (This is not to say that The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions is unsuccessful, but rather to say that it is successful within its own limitations of being written 'for big children' 「给大孩子们」.) Gone are the direct addresses to the reader by the narrator introduced by the stock phrase 'Gentle readers' 读者诸君 which so displeased the contemporary critic Wang Shuming and in their place is a low-profile third-person narrative technique that ably suits the seriousness of Zhang's purpose in In the City. 'Gentle readers' works well in The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions but this is because Zhang's satirical method is to be less than serious. In the City treads different ground, using a realistic descriptive approach and replacing satire with occasional humour.

In the City does not, unlike One Year and The Pulse of the Age, give the impression of being a number of anecdotes linked together by a tenuous and not particularly interesting plot thread. The novel builds up to various climaxes which usually coincide with the end of a chapter, such as the ironic discovery by Ding Shousong that his travelling companion on the ferry and He Yunsun are one and the same person, the death from venereal disease of Tang Qikun's illegitimate son, and the final series of crises which ruin Tang Qikun's plan to sell his family's land. The final picture of Tang Qikun besieged by creditors, oppressed by his mother and abandoned by his mistress is a suitable note on which to end the novel, and it eloquently makes the point

which the author clearly has in mind, namely that it is only a question of time before the corrupt, spendthrift, ruthless gentry class receive their come-uppance.

There is no precise indication as to when the events described in the novel are meant to have taken place. There are references to various festivals but no particular year is mentioned. At one point in the novel, the head of the Ding household returns home in a state of high excitement; people at the teahouse told him that 10,000 troops had passed through the district. This may or may not be a reference to the Northern Expedition of 1926-27; if it is such a reference it is not explicit. References to the activities of brigands and bandits in the countryside are fairly reliable signs of the times, but the action of the novel can be fixed no more precisely than the late 20s or early 1930s. The upper date is determined by the lack of any reference to the Japanese. Zhang's failure to specify any date suggests that he may well have been aiming to generalise, describing a domestic scenario that might have taken place at any time between 1925 and 1935, and the ubiquitous Liuzhen 柳鎮 may well be meant to represent any small town along the banks of the Changjiang 长江.

From the point of view of characterisation, In the City is far and away Zhang's most successful novel. There are many rounded portraits and even some of the less important characters come stunningly to life. Tang Qikun is of course the most significant character and his thoroughly evil nature also makes him the most despicable. His actions are motivated entirely by his desire to improve his own circumstances. When his illegitimate child is dying he can think only of going out and having a good time to distract himself from the unpleasantness of thinking about or even noticing his dying son. Tang Qikun is portrayed as a good-for-nothing schemer, who shows no sign of acting responsibly towards anyone except himself. His method of facing up to problems is to run away from them, pretend they do not exist or find some dishonest or dishonourable way of skating round them. Ding Shousong is another character who is

developed well, though not as thoroughly or exhaustively as Tang Qikun. He is a snivelling, obsequious soul who by trying to please everyone ends up by pleasing no one. He throws in his lot with Tang Qikun, running errands for him, but unable to keep a secret he cannot resist revealing his master's activities to the Ding household and he is thrown unceremoniously out by Tang Qikun when he discovers his disloyalty. Clutching his bundle of bedding, he makes his pitiful way to the Ding household where he finds he is equally unpopular. Desperate not to return home in a worse state than when he set out, he makes the mistake of trying to steal some watches. When he is escorted from the scene there seems little he can hope for but punishment and confinement. His attempts at being scheming or devious are no match for the guile of his town-dwelling relatives and he would seem well-advised not to have come to Liuzhen in the first place. Of the minor characters, Ding laotaiye 丁老太爷, the head of the Ding household, is an endearing example. Clearly enjoying his dotage, he lives for his daily visits to the teahouse and his ever-increasing collection of clocks and watches. When his two sons start to fight in his study, his first and overriding concern is the preservation of his time-pieces. On another occasion his granddaughter, confronting his baffling collection of chronometers all of which tell a different time, asked him which one was accurate. The old man answered impatiently 'They are all accurate'. Another successful portrait of a minor character is Wen saozhi 温嫂子, a redoubtable woman who left her spendthrift husband to become a maid to the old lady of the Tang household. Observing an upturn in the fortunes of the Ding household, she transferred her services to the widow of Tang Qikun's elder brother. Ever in the company of her easy-going mistress, she enjoys a standing somewhat above the other servants. She regards the arrival of Ding Shousong as a threat to her position and it is with glee at the end of the story that she sends him packing, handing over only 50 cents of the three dollars her mistress had instructed her to give Ding Shousong to help him on his way. She proves herself to be a skilful manipulator and ruthless preserver of her position in the household.

In the City reveals Zhang capable for the first time of writing a full-length novel that does not appear like a series of short stories clumsily linked together. Unfortunately Zhang never again used this mature, realistic style to write another novel like In the City. His last, long unfinished novel Golden Duck Empire 《金鸭帝国》¹ reverts to his 'for big children' style that he used in The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions.

'Mr. Hua Wei': an equivocal or an unequivocal work of (anti Japanese) propaganda?

'Mr. Hua Wei' was published in the first number of the resistance magazine Wenyi zhendi on 16 April 1938. It took up only three pages of the magazine, but this remarkably short work engendered a debate quite out of proportion to its size which was to last into the early 1940s. In the ninth number of Wenyi zhendi Mao Dun, then editor of the magazine, reported that he had received a considerable number of letters about 'Mr. Hua Wei' all of which expressed a great interest in the story.² At the same time however there were also those who said that the work "did more harm than good" to the cause of the resistance, while others said that it fulfilled "a negative purpose". Reactions to 'Mr. Hua Wei' became even more divided after it was discovered that Zhang's story had been translated into Japanese and had appeared in the November 1938 edition of the Japanese magazine Kaizō 《改造》. On 22 February 1939 in the Guilin 桂林 newspaper Jiuwang ribao there appeared an article written by Lin Lin 林林 condemning 'Mr. Hua Wei' for "conforming with fascist propaganda, and strengthening their [the Japanese] aggressive beliefs" ("...符合着法西斯主义的宣传,而增强他们侵略的信念..."). Zhang entered into the

1 Shaonian xianfeng 1:1-4, 8-9 (20. 2. 1938 - 20. 6. 1938) published under the title 'The Story of Imperialism' 帝国主义的故事.

2 Wenyi zhendi 1:9 (16. 8. 1938) 283-4. Mao Dun's article was entitled 八月的感想.

debate by writing an answer to Lin Lin's letter.¹ In June 1939, a more extensive article about 'Mr. Hua Wei' written by Zhang entitled 'On defects' 论缺点² appeared. Detractors and supporters of Zhang's work wrote articles and counter-articles in magazines and newspapers of the day such as Wenyi zhendi, Jiuwang ribao, Libao and Qiyue up until the early 1940s. Even as late as 1952, Zhang was prompted to send a letter entitled 'On the subject of "Mr. Hua Wei"' 关于《华威先生》 to the editor of Zhongguo yuwen 《中国语文》 elaborating his current views on the story.³

Since its initial publication in 1938 'Mr. Hua Wei' has been Zhang's most consistently reproduced work, finding a place in almost all collections of Zhang's works as well as in general anthologies of literature of the modern period, and as a result of its frequent reprintings it has come to be regarded as the most representative work of Zhang's corpus.

'Mr. Hua Wei' is in fact little more than a character sketch⁴ of its eponymous hero. The narrative which is relayed by a first person narrator who claims to be distantly related to Mr. Hua Wei recounts a series of seemingly random scenes in which Mr. Hua Wei participates and these are linked together by passages of comment on and explanation of Mr. Hua Wei's behaviour. Within its short scope the narrative builds up a convincing picture of Mr. Hua Wei — the reader can obtain a picture of a plump, cigar-toting, middle-aged man with a worn leather brief-case tucked under his arm and a walking-stick supporting his hurried steps — and by the end of the story a number of Mr. Hua Wei's distinctive traits have become apparent. He is a professional participant in resistance work committees, going to great lengths to have himself elected to each new

1 关于华威先生赴日——作者的意见
appeared in Jiuwang ribao (15. 3. 1939).

2 Libao (1. 6. 1939).

3 Zhongguo yuwen (20. 10. 1952) 26.

4 'Mr. Hua Wei' appeared together with two other stories of the War of Resistance period under the collective title Three Sketches 《速写三篇》.

committee. His involvement in committee work follows a pattern: having had himself elected to a committee, he hurries late to its meetings, interrupts the proceedings to make a two-point speech before rushing off to his next engagement. The two points that Mr. Hua Wei invariably makes are i) the need to work hard, and ii) the need for the more youthful members of the committee to recognise a centralised leadership. Whilst Mr. Hua Wei's points are on the surface reasonable, they sound hollow coming from him and give the impression that he is merely trying to safeguard his own position in the hierarchy. The proof of this becomes apparent when the reader learns of Mr. Hua Wei's behaviour when with his peer-group. When he attends the Central Committee of the Cultural World's Resistance to the Enemy 文化界抗敌总会 he smiles at each of the committee members in turn and even takes time to discuss the drinking exploits of the previous night with one of his fellow committee members. His speech to his peers is the corollary of his speeches to the other committees; he merely points out the need for them to fulfil adequately the role of a centralised leadership. The total impression gained of Mr. Hua Wei is of a vain man uninterested in the practical problems of resistance work and interested only in maintaining his own indispensability. There are however signs that Mr. Hua Wei's grip on committee work is not total for he discovers that a rival committee has been set up without his knowledge and to which he has not been invited. The impression given is that it is only a question of time before all the practical resistance work will be carried out by the young activists and the 'power' of Mr. Hua Wei and the like will prove no more than self-delusory, but at the end of the story Mr. Hua Wei is still looking forward to yet another day with its busy round of meetings, lectures, entertaining and being entertained.

'Mr. Hua Wei' and the critical furor that succeeded its publication produced two somewhat contradictory consequences. First, it succeeded in reaching its satirical mark for it occasioned the doubt in the minds of some of the leaders of the cultural resistance that Zhang was referring to them. In 'On defects' Zhang drew attention to their sensitivities:

"Why do you wonder if the character in my story is alluding to you? Isn't it that you, like this character, have these defects? People who have stolen things are always afraid that people will mention robbery"

（“你为什么疑心我这文章的人物是影射你呢？是不是你也跟这个人物一样的有这些缺点呢？偷过东西的人，生怕人家谈起贼....”）

Secondly, the very success of 'Mr. Hua Wei' and its proximity to the knuckle, produced a barrage of malignant, indignant and not always fair criticism. As a result, Zhang was led to feel that in some way he had written 'Mr. Hua Wei' too quickly, too casually, without sufficient thought to the possible consequences and "because of this I made up my mind that if I was going to write things in future, I would certainly find a way not to provoke resentment". (因此我就打定主意,要写文章,一定设法不招怨.) Unfortunately 'Mr. Hua Wei' (together with the two other stories 'Mr. Tan Jiu's Work' and 'A New Life' that appeared about the same time and were also included in the collection 《速写三篇》) effectively marked the end of Zhang's career as a writer of short fiction. How much this was due to disillusionment with the critical response to 'Mr. Hua Wei' and how much it was a consequence of Zhang's deteriorating health which forced him to give up all writing in the autumn of 1942, it is not possible to evaluate precisely, but what is clear is that between 1940 and the autumn of 1942, Zhang switched from writing fiction to the writing of polemics and works on literary theory and criticism.¹

On a technical level what claim has 'Mr. Hua Wei' to be considered Zhang's finest work? Without doubt it is one of his sparest works, and trivial or irrelevant intrusions have clearly been kept deliberately to a minimum. Its use of a first person narrative technique suggests a reversion to the

¹ Golden Duck Empire was probably written mainly in 1938 and 1939 and in any case completed before October 1940, when Zhang mentioned in Wenyi zhendi 6:1 that Golden Duck Empire was intended only as the first part of a larger work The Story of Imperialism, which subsequently he did not proceed with.

earlier period of Zhang's short story production, but unlike the self-conscious, rumbustious first-person narrators of stories like 'A Lackadaisical Love Story', Mr. Hua Wei's distant relative draws only the most modest attention to himself. The use of 'a distant relative' of the main character to narrate a satirical short story has obvious positive advantages; first, it helps to create the illusion of authenticity because a relative's testimony is certainly knowledgeable; and secondly, the use of 'a distant relative' distances the author/narrator from the object of satire and circumvents the tendency to overdo the satire. Unfortunately for Zhang, there were those amongst his readers who either through stupidity or mischievousness took his story at face value and asked such questions as 'Does Mr. Zhang really have such a relative?' He did his best to parry the attempts of those who wanted a witch-hunt for the "real" Mr. Hua Wei by explaining that Mr. Hua Wei was a composite character rather than one person of his acquaintance but once his readers had taken it upon themselves to regard Zhang's fiction as a faithful reflection of reality the situation was already irretrievable.

The narrative structure avoids the chronological recounting of a story line preferring instead the apparently haphazard account of incidental anecdote which helps to build up an impression of the character of Mr. Hua Wei in the mind of the reader. To the extent that 'Mr. Hua Wei' is only a character sketch it strays away from the norm for 'a modern short story' — i.e. a short story that hinges upon some unexpected turn of plot — but there are of course many examples of character sketches that are short stories.

If one compares 'Mr. Hua Wei' with Zhang's most successful earlier short stories like 'Back and Breasts', 'The Bao Family, Father and Son' and 'Bees', none of these earlier stories can compare with 'Mr. Hua Wei' for spareness of execution, but perhaps it is only valid to compare 'Mr. Hua Wei' with Zhang's other character sketches and those stories where the plot is of secondary importance to the analysis and description of a main character. 'Mr. Hua Wei' is far and away his most successful and skilful attempt at writing for this genre.

The other 'sketches': Mr. Tan jiu and Li Yimo.

Whether 'Mr. Tan jiu's Work' 谭九先生的工作 was published in a magazine of the day has not as yet been ascertained, but the indications are that it was written earlier than 'Mr. Hua Wei' in November 1937.¹ 'A New Life' 「新生」² was not written until September 1938.

Both 'Mr. Tan jiu's Work' and 'A New Life' describe characters whose commitment to the cause of resistance to the Japanese is negligible. Mr. Tan jiu is a small-town landlord who sees the fervour for patriotic resistance as an opportunity for him to reinforce his position in this small-town's society. He pays no more than lip-service to patriotic ideals and is interested only in setting himself up as leader of a resistance organisation peopled with his own friends and supporters. His plan is foiled by his enemy and uncle Tan shiyi taigong 谭十一太公 who takes advantage of Mr. Tan jiu's absence from town to participate in the initial setting up of a resistance association. By the time Mr. Tan jiu returns from his trip (ostensibly to collect rent) he is presented with the accomplished fact that the town's primary school in co-operation with the Centre for the Education of the Masses 民众教育馆 in the neighbouring town, had already started to organise practical resistance activities such as air raid drill instruction, relief work to help families of army personnel and the preparation of instructive wall posters. When Mr. Tan jiu puts forward his plan to organise a Grand Association for Resistance to the Enemy 抗敌大会 his suggestion meets with a marked lack of enthusiasm. Finding that he has been foiled by his uncle and other activists, Mr. Tan jiu returns home and disregards invitations for him to participate in the resistance work in the hope that this work will collapse without his participation. He spreads pessimistic and malicious rumours in the tea-house about the imminent failure of the resistance work. When he learns that moves are afoot to eradicate

1 'Mr. Hua Wei' was apparently written in February 1938, two months before its publication in Wenyi zhendi.

2 Wenyi zhendi 2:2 (1. 11. 1938).

speculative hoarding of grain, he takes this as a personal attack on himself and foolishly rushes to confront Wang laoshi 王 老 师, a teacher at the primary school, and Mr. Chen 陈 先 生, the editor of the wall posters. They greet Mr. Tan jiu's outburst of "Fine, fine! When someone is as busy as hell doing his work here, you are actually attacking him behind his back!" with polite incomprehension. Mr. Tan jiu's transparent guilt prompts him to hang himself for a sheep as a lamb by broadcasting the fact that he has been hoarding grain to line his pocket. His embarrassment is made complete at the end of the story when one of his cronies comes to ask about the job that Mr. Tan jiu had promised him on his Grand Committee.

Li Yimo 李 逸 漠, the central character in 'A New Life' has more pretensions to learning than Mr. Tan jiu, but he is equally hypocritical in his attitude towards resistance work. Leaving his wife and daughter with his in-laws and abandoning his life as a recluse, he obtains a job as an art teacher in a school run by an old friend from student days. His thinking goes along these lines: "What is the point of staying with my wife in the countryside? I have made up my mind: I have come to this backwater to do some work. I am going to start my — my new life!" ("陪太太隐在乡下有什么意思呢。我是决定了的：我要到这儿后方来做点工作。我要开始我的——我的新生!")

Unfortunately his resolve to start a new life is soon weakened by feelings of homesickness, boredom and the desire to drink with agreeable companions. His friend, headmaster Pan 潘 校 长 does his best to keep Li Yimo happy but he steers clear of drink because of heart trouble. The school staff has only one other 'drinker' and that is Zhang laoxiansheng 章 老 先 生, the elderly language teacher who obstinately refuses to countenance the vernacular language 白 话 文. Headmaster Pan warns Li Yimo that Zhang laoxiansheng is reactionary to the point of being a traitor. Finally, in desperation, Li Yimo seeks out Zhang and they go out on a drinking binge together. Zhang claims to have no money and Li pays for all

the drinks as well as supplying huge quantities of cigarettes; in return Zhang expounds his reactionary views on the current state of the nation:

"For instance -- in the few places they [the Japanese] have come to, everything is really fine at first. Later, however, the partisans arrive, and also there are anti-Japanese elements. Fine, as soon as this happens, they naturally search, arrest and kill people, so that ordinary people cannot go about their business in peace, what is the use of the partisans?"

(“比如——他们到的一些地方，先倒也好好的。然而后来来了游击队，又有了反日分子。好了，这样一来，他们自然就去搜捕，杀人，弄得老百姓不得安业，.... 游击队有什么好处呢!....”)

Li argues with Zhang at first, but after a time he does not bother any longer, allowing Zhang's unpatriotic views to go uncontradicted. Feeling out of tune with his surroundings and companions he becomes increasingly isolated. He wishes that he could -- like a character in a piece of European literature he half remembers -- go to sleep and wake to find "a happy China, a China that had gone through fifty years of bitter struggle." His disillusion with present discomfort leads him finally to concur with Zhang's traitorous views and his realisation of this shakes him. The end of the story finds him lonely, paranoid and indecisive.

Thematically there are strong parallels between 'A New Life', 'Mr. Hua Wei' and '1924-1934'. All three works describe characters whose subtlety lies in the ambiguity of their thinking. In the case of Mr. Hua Wei, it is uncertain whether he is a conscious self-seeker or whether he persuades himself of his own good intentions. Li Yimo and the author of the letters in '1924-1934' are also quite possibly guilty of self-delusion without this being clearly stated.

In their different ways, all three of the stories in

Three Sketches describe characters who do little or nothing to aid the cause of resistance to the Japanese. The form in which each story is presented varies considerably. As we have seen 'Mr. Hua Wei' is plotless and no more than a brief though skilfully executed character sketch. 'Mr. Tan jiu's Work' is the most conventional of the three stories having a plot which is set against a linear time-scale. 'A New Life' is the most sophisticated of the three stories; the analysis of Li Yimo's character is conducted at close-quarters, verging at times on the psychological, and supplemented with elucidating flashbacks. There are frequent examples of mental ramblings like:

It was as if he was afraid people could see into his feelings — he glanced at a student at his side, immediately folding his arms to rectify his own thoughts. He told himself very coldly: in such a troubled epoch as this, nobody should long for his former comfortable life any more, and nobody should shut his doors and carry on with his idle existence.

(他怕人家会看穿他的心事似的——向旁边一个学生瞟了一眼,马上又着手来校正自己的思想。他很冷静地告诉自己:在这么一个苦难的大时代里,谁也不能够再贪图他过去那种舒服的生活,谁也不能关起门过他的清闲日子了。)

'A New Life' provides a convincing picture of an educated, landed (there is mention of Li Yimo's wife collecting rent), and wealthy (Li Yimo has brought 400 dollars pocket money with him to the school) character who is at odds with the age in which he is living. His dream of starting a new life is no more than a piece of self-deception. With 'A New Life', Zhang Tianyi returned to the description of those, in the same educated class to which he belonged, who bathe in self-indulgent reflection rather than taking steps to act positively. The precursors of 'A New Life' include 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days', 'Piggut's Chagrin', 'Three Brothers' and '1924-1934'.

What makes 'A New Life' inferior to 'Mr. Hua Wei' is its

linear (and therefore predictable) progression from high expectations to dereliction. 'Mr. Hua Wei' disobeys this norm. This apart, the incisive narrative presentation of 'Mr. Hua Wei' surpasses that used in 'A New Life'.

Zhang's major work on literary theory: The Description of Characters.

The Description of Characters 《谈人物描写》 is Zhang's major work of literary theory. It was commissioned by the editor of Kangzhan wenyi 《抗战文艺》 and appeared serialised in the magazine in editions published on 10 November 1941 and 15 June 1942. It was subsequently published in book form in September 1942 and a new edition of the work appeared in 1947.¹

The Description of Characters is Zhang's most extensive work of literary theory and coming as it does at the end of his career as a writer of adult fiction, it provides a useful insight into Zhang's mature views on literary creativity as well as giving many clues to the beliefs that underpinned his own output of fiction. The book is frequently repetitive and is written in Zhang's familiar conversational style, but without recourse to the scatology of say 'The story of my writing career'. It reveals various theories on literary practices and purposes clearly based on a combination of Zhang's personal experience as a writer of fiction and his reading of literature, both Chinese and of the world. His theories deal with various aspects of creation and reception and I propose to consider them in the order in which they appear in the work.

The first hypothesis put forward by Zhang is that there are two categories of stories: the first kind of story where the writer "writes a story for the sake of writing a story" (".... 为写故事而写故事,") is

¹ Most recently this work has been republished as part of a collection of Zhang's critical works entitled Zhang Tianyi lun chuanguo 《张天翼论创作》, Shanghai wenyi chubanshe (10. 1982).

classified by Zhang as a story that can be told (「讲得出」), i.e. a story that can be recounted orally; the second kind of story is the story which "describes characters" (".... 是写人物的") and this Zhang categorises as the kind of story that cannot be recounted orally ("讲不出的"). Zhang is careful to make it clear that his hypothesis is only a rule of thumb for he emphasises that he does not mean that these two types of stories are mutually exclusive and excluding. He also makes clear that he is only interested in the best stories and in his opinion the best stories are those that fall into the second category, i.e. those stories that "describe characters" and "cannot be recounted orally". He complains that simple plot-based stories are second-rate and fail to capture his attention. To strengthen his argument Zhang cites an historical trend to back up his hypothesis: ".... with a nation's poetry, everyone progresses along this kind of path; from writing stories to writing about people." (".... 一个民族的诗, 大家都是出这么一条路进步的; 从写故事到写人.")

Proceeding from his initial premise Zhang goes on to consider some of the objectives and pitfalls in writing about characters. He complains that many writers try to make their characters extraordinary rather than making them appear to live for the reader. Zhang posits that authors often write about a "good" person or an ideal person that exists only in their mind's eye rather than making an effort to describe a character who is true to life. (Interestingly Zhang makes the point that truth is to be found even in fantasy.)

Zhang also considers the attitudes of authors towards the writing activity:

Every great writer has his own philosophy of life, and this proceeds from his love and concern for life.

(只是大作家总有他自己的人生哲学, 这是出于他对人生的热爱, 关心.)

Zhang, however, warns authors not to expect that their readers will all react in an identical way to their works. Like

authors, each reader has his own views on life and they will colour his judgement when he reads. Zhang does, nevertheless, suggest that great writers have the power to bring their readers round to their way of thinking, their philosophy of life and ultimately to their way of viewing their characters. Although Zhang concedes the didactic purpose of literature, he implies that only the greatest writers have sufficient power to change people's attitudes.

Zhang provides some useful advice to would-be authors:

If you want to be a writer, you must take all your habits, interests, etc., etc., and adapt them to your profession. You cannot be indifferent to life, you must swim about in the sea of life, and go and explore human nature, and go and unearth humanity.

(要是你想做一个作家,那你就得把你的一切习惯、兴味、等等,都去适应你的事业。你不能对人生冷淡,你应当到人生的大海里游来游去,去探索人性,去发掘人性.....)

Apart from these positive steps that Zhang suggests, he also holds up 'sensitivity' 敏感 as an innate quality that would-be authors ought to have. According to Zhang it is not enough simply to record the words and conversations of characters, the successful (and necessarily sensitive) writer must notice the actions and facial expressions of his characters.

Zhang goes on to emphasise the need for training:

".... I think an author's self-cultivation should not only include reading books, should not only include the obtaining of all kinds of knowledge that he needs, but of particular importance should be — the cultivation of his personality.

(.... 我以为一个作家的修养,不但是要读书,不但是要获得他所需的各种知识,而且尤其要紧的是一他的人格修养。)

He goes as far as to suggest that the self-cultivation of an author's personality should result in the establishment of a 'poet's "ego"' (诗人的「我」):

If he has this kind of poet's "ego", he will first have great love, and genuine sympathy that issues from his inner depths, and subsequently he will be able, by really comparing other people's feelings with his own, to know from experience the things that his characters would feel: you will be able to sorrow for this person's sorrows, and take pleasure in this person's pleasures.

(他有这样的诗人之「我」,那么他首先就有伟大的爱,有从他深处发出来的真正同情,因此他能够真正将心比心地去体会他的人 物所感到的东西:你能憂其人之所憂,乐其人之所乐。)

Only in these circumstances, Zhang feels, does a writer have a sufficiently deep understanding of his characters. Each author can choose how complex he makes his characters and those authors who strike the right, and thus ideal, balance do so intuitively.

He observes that most writers tend to use their friends as models for characters and then let their imagination go to work, so that any gaps in character facets or remembered incident can be filled by using one's imagination. He warns against making characters too easily identifiable with their models and cites Maupassant as an example of an author who came unstuck in this respect.

Finally Zhang reiterates the need for a truthful representation of humanity; so long as the character's soul is realistically described, it does not matter what artifice or flight of fancy the author uses to write his story, for the essential aim of bringing the character to life for the reader will have been achieved.

The Description of Characters contains no profound or new

propositions on literary theory, but it is written in a readable style and the points that Zhang makes, simple though they often are, are well illustrated with examples. The book is highly repetitive, often making the same point several times, but as a work of literary theory it nonetheless marks an advance in sophistication over Zhang's earlier work 'The story of my writing career'.

The main interest of The Description of Characters lies in the insight it gives into Zhang's own methods of literary creativity. It also provides some valuable evidence of the books that Zhang read and the works that he liked. If the examples that he uses in the book are but a pointer to the extent of his reading, then he is certainly well-read in both Chinese and Western literature. There are for instance references to Ivanhoe, Aesop's fables, the Bible, Greek myths, Arnold Bennett, Turgenev, Zola, 'Macbeth', 'Hamlet', Gogol, Roman Roland, Madame Bovary, and at one point he declares his preference for Tolstoy's works over Maupassant's. As for Chinese literature, Zhang writes with particular affection of The Journey to the West 《西游记》 and The Dream of the Red Chamber 《红楼梦》. He also picks out the following as characters who particularly captured his imagination: Wang Feng jie 王凤姐, Jia Baoyu 贾宝玉, Zhu ba jie 猪八戒 and A Q 阿Q.

Light is also shed on Zhang's philosophy of writing, as in this passage:

When a writer is engaged in the creative process, if he is worrying all the time about payment for his work, or if he keeps on thinking about how his wife argued with him just now, then he certainly won't be able to go on writing. He must forget about these things, and concentrate all his efforts on writing his work, and this only works if he succeeds in transporting his entire self into the world which he has created.

On other occasions Zhang reveals in passing something of his philosophy of life, as for example: "I have never believed that there are any innately good or innately bad people in the world."

But for the purpose of more fully comprehending Zhang's development as a writer clues to his literary philosophy are the most interesting and useful. Underlying the importance that Zhang attaches to the description of character in fiction is the implicit belief that characters come to life for the authors creating them: "They [the characters that inhabit books] ride together with us in a boat on the sea of life" ("他们跟我们在生命的大海里同驶着一艘船"). Unfortunately The Description of Characters fails as a satisfactory index of the creative philosophy of which Zhang made use in writing the huge number of short stories that make up the bulk of his literary output, because at no point does Zhang attempt to make a distinction between short stories and novels. In fact most of the examples in the book refer to novels, rather than short stories. As a result it is impossible to apply any of the theses that Zhang puts forward to his own short stories with any degree of confidence.

The other works of literary criticism and theory.

Although The Description of Characters was Zhang's longest, most sustained work of literary theory, he also wrote a number of other works between late 1938 and 1942, works of propaganda, criticism and theory, which when taken together reveal to a considerable extent his mature thoughts about literature. These works of propaganda, criticism and theory can be divided roughly into five categories:

- i) articles about 'Mr. Hua Wei';
- ii) theoretical and propagandist articles about the War of Resistance to Japan;
- iii) articles about Chinese literature;
- iv) articles about Western literature;
- v) articles about literary theory and creative writing.

The articles dealing with 'Mr. Hua Wei' and the controversy that arose after its publication in a Japanese magazine have already been dealt with in the section devoted to 'Mr. Hua Wei' (see pp.286-290). Most of the theoretical and propagandist articles about

the War of Resistance to Japan appeared in the Changsha newspaper Guancha ribao and have not as yet been republished. From the tone of some of the titles — 'Guard against Chinese traitors' 提防汉奸, 'Chinese traitors and good people' 汉奸和好人, for example — one might suspect that Zhang was writing about Zhou Zuoren. Other titles like 'Offensive and counter-offensive' 战争与反战争 and 'This is the year for thorough-going resistance to the Japanese' 今年是全面抗战年 suggest that their content was of a general propagandist nature. The few works of this type that have been republished ¹ were those that appeared first in 1939 and 1940: 'The arts and struggle' 艺术与斗争 ² and 'About material "irrelevant" to the War of Resistance' 论"无关"抗战的题材. ³

'The arts and struggle' is an overtly propagandist work, addressed to an unnamed correspondent and dealing with the question of whether the pursuit of the artistic is a valid and self-justifying end. Zhang picks on the point made by his correspondent that he "wants to spend less time on trivial matters, and devote all his energies to creative writing" (" 要少管闲事, 专心习作 ") and observes that the "trivial matters" to which he refers are in fact his responsibilities as a refugee relief worker (救亡工作者). Having been given his opportunity, Zhang goes on to extend his attack to take in all those artists who live in "ivory towers" and deliberately divorce themselves from unpleasant realities, ignoring political problems, social problems and the like. This is a familiar tack that we have already observed in 'Little-known works of Academe' but whereas in that work Zhang took care to distance himself from his attitudes, 'The arts and struggle' shows him speaking directly from the emotions. Whilst his ideas show little change, the method of communicating them has become far more direct. Thus he sums up the consequences of

1 See Zhang Tianyi lun chuanguo, Shanghai Wenyi chubanshe (10. 1982) and Zhang Tianyi wenxue pinglun ji, Beijing Renmin wenxue chubanshe (2. 1984).

2 Guancha ribao (2, 3. 3. 1939).

3 Wenxue yuebao 1:6 (15. 6. 1940).

ivory-towerism: "If this influence were once to spread, then it would be advantageous to the invaders, and would be harmful to the Chinese people".

Zhang goes on to develop his ideas about the use to which "cultural" propaganda can be put: he observes that the agents of oppression can use military might to crush revolt, and at the same time use "culture" to mitigate the effects of an unspecified revolution.

In answer to those who claim that 'Art is for Art's Sake' ("为艺术而艺术"), Zhang makes the categorical assertion that "all art is for the sake of struggle, the struggle for the ~~definite~~ benefit of ^{a certain body of people} ~~the people~~" ("... 一切艺术都是为了斗争, 为了一定的人群的利益而斗争"). Much of the article is taken up with the laborious reiteration of this point, though he does at least introduce the rider: "This is certainly not to say — that all writings of the struggle variety are works of art". (绝对不是说——一切斗争性的文字就是艺术。)

'The arts and struggle' is most significant for its style; it is markedly different from Zhang's earlier works of criticism and theory, lacking their humour and indirectness of approach. Clearly Zhang adapted his style and approach to fit in with the necessities of the time. The seriousness of the domestic situation in March 1939 dictated the abandonment of subtlety and obliqueness and the adoption of a direct approach.

'About material "irrelevant" to the War of Resistance' like 'The arts and struggle' is addressed to a Mr. XX (XX 先生) and takes the form of a letter answering points attributed to Mr. XX. At one point Zhang writes "In your letters you have not yet spoken in any great detail about your subject matter ...", which taken together with other references gives the impression that Zhang's correspondent is a younger writer seeking advice on how to write fiction. It is worth keeping in mind that Zhang had during the spring and summer of 1938 been engaged in teaching

a creative writing course in Changsha, ¹ which helps to explain Zhang's subsequent preoccupation with creative writing and its mechanics. 'About material "irrelevant" to the War of Resistance' is not, however, narrowly limited to the technicalities of creative writing; it affords Zhang another opportunity to attack those aesthetes who inhabit "ivory towers" and who wish to have nothing to do with the war raging around them. Zhang does not name names but rather refers obliquely to "those few old gentlemen who advocate writing about subjects that have nothing to do with the War of Resistance" (".... 他们几位主张写无关抗战的大爷们....") The likelihood is that Zhang had in mind Liang Shiqiu 梁实秋 who at the end of 1938 advocated that "literature should have nothing to do with the War of Resistance" and criticised the trend towards "formulism" 公式主义 in literature and the production of an "eight-legged essay style of resistance literature" '抗战八股'.²

Zhang attacks those who are prejudiced against literature which "has a firm grasp on the age" 紧抓住时代 and those who dismiss such works as being ~~"much of a muchness"~~ 差不多. He suggests to his correspondent that he research his characters thoroughly and wagers that if he follows such a course he will certainly find that his character has some connection with the War of Resistance. The underlying premise of Zhang's argument is that the War of Resistance was all-pervasive by 1940 so that no "flesh and blood" Chinese could possibly remain detached from what was going on all around. Referring to the character in his correspondent's work, Zhang comments:

.... he is a modern Chinese, so the oppression of our nation by imperialists, and our awakening, and our rising up, as well as the political and cultural revolutions, all of these things, naturally have had an influence on him, causing both his life and his way of thinking to change.

1 See Biography p. 364 and Ouyang Wenbin's reminiscence in Renwu 1981:3 (8. 5. 1981) 118-122.

2 Liang Shiqiu, who was editor of the supplement Pingming 《平明》 to the Chongqing newspaper Zhongyang ribao at the time wrote these remarks in an editorial entitled 编者的话 that appeared in Pingming on 1. 12. 1938.

(.... 他既是一个现代的中国
人, 那么我们中国的被帝国主义
压迫, 而觉醒, 而站起, 以及政
治的和文化的革命, 这种种一
切, 当然影响了 他, 使他无论
在生活方面, 思想意识方面, 都
起了变化。)

Zhang proceeds to draw fine distinctions between various categories of "relevant" ("有关") material:

Everything that is "relevant" is, however, certainly not of equal importance: amongst them will be the unimportant, and some things will only be of secondary importance, The more important the thing seized upon the better.

(然而一切 "有关" 并非全都相等: 其中有的是不重要的, 有的仅是次要的, ... 抓住了那越是主要的就越好。)

Zhang concludes that characters in contemporary fiction that reflects the age who are exceptions to the rule and have no connection with the War of Resistance are unimaginable.

Part of Zhang's long essay 'Concerning ethnic forms in literature' 关于文艺的民族形式¹ also deals with effective propaganda during the War of Resistance. Zhang notes that several of his friends had taken to writing old-style vernacular fiction 通俗文艺作品 using material "relevant" to the War of Resistance as its subject matter. Zhang criticises his friends for producing unsuitable works that have a hackneyed appearance or even a deleterious effect on readers.

All of Zhang's remarks and comments on the subject of resistance literature and propaganda are entirely in line with the attitudes and ideas put forward by other Communist writers at this time, such as Luo Sun 罗荪, Chen Baichen 陈白尘 and Song Zhidi 宋之的。

¹ Xiandai wenyi 2:1 (25. 10. 1940), 2:2 (25. 11. 1940).

As regards Zhang's articles about Chinese literature at about this time, the most notable dealt with 'The True Story of A Q', The Dream of the Red Chamber and The Scholars. Zhang's 'About "The True Story of A Q"' 论《阿Q正传》¹ is partly autobiographical dealing with Zhang's earliest literary attempts and his recollection of his initial response to reading 'The True Story of A Q' whilst still at school. The literary critical content of the essay becomes apparent when Zhang compares his initial response with his subsequent response, moving from self-conscious laughter to a more thorough understanding of the deeper implications of Lu Xun's work.

The mildest of rebukes is discernible when Zhang notes the number of imitators 'The True Story of A Q' spawned:

One can also say that a lot of our present-day works are rewriting 'The True Story of A Q'.

(这也可以说,我们中国现在的许多作品,是在重写着「阿Q正传」。)

Much of the rest of 'About "The True Story of A Q"' makes use of the example given by Lu Xun's work to expand on Zhang's ideas about literary creativity.

'Jia Baoyu's becoming a monk' 贾宝玉的出家² is another lengthy work of literary criticism, dealing in considerable detail with one small aspect of The Dream of the Red Chamber. It is a monotonous essay which falls into the literary critical trap of treating fiction as though it were reality, and thereby extrapolating beyond the limits of the work. Whilst it is fun to hypothesise about what might have been, it does nothing to advance literary criticism. What this essay does show, however, is Zhang's clear affection for classic works of Chinese literature. We have already noted this characteristic in our discussion of The Description of Characters and it is clearly reiterated in this essay.

¹ Wenyi zhendi 6:1 (10. 1. 1941).

² Wenxue chuanguo 1:3 (15. 11. 1942).

'On reading The Scholars' 读《儒林外史》¹
is a detailed discussion of some of the characters in The Scholars.

Apart from the many references to be found in The Description of Characters that deal with foreign literature, Zhang also wrote an essay entitled 'Discussing "Hamlet"' 谈《哈姆莱特》,² which reveals the high esteem he had for Shakespeare and his works.

By far the largest body of Zhang's critical output during this period dealt with 'literary theory and creative writing'. The Description of Characters, a book-length work, has already been dealt with earlier. Early in 1939 Zhang wrote a series of articles under the title 'Random observations on learning to write' 习作杂谈.³ In a rather superficial, journalistic way Zhang discusses various aspects of creative writing. In the first article Zhang warns would-be writers not to strive always after extraordinary subject matter when ordinary, everyday material will do just as well. For example Zhang points to the ordinari-ness of A Q, and to Mao Dun's Midnight 《子夜》 as being an ordinary story. In the second article, Zhang acknowledges that anything that is observed can provide material for fiction, but he emphasises the need for thorough research into what underlies prospective material before it can be used effectively. In the third and final article, Zhang discusses the author's attitude to his characters. His conclusion is:

We painstakingly research a character and his life, observe his relationship with other things, burrow into his inner depths, and when we write we naturally reveal our attitude, and this is our criticism of him [the character]. This is the thing we want to explain, the thing we want to present to the reader. This is the significance of a literary work.

Without this, no matter how prettily one writes, it will not make it a work of literature.

1 Wenyi zazhi 2:1 (15. 12. 1942).

2 Wenyi zazhi 1:1 (15. 1. 1942).

3 Guancha ribao (8, 17, 20. 1. 1939).

(我们对一个人物和他的生活仔细地研究,看出他与别的东西的联系,发掘到他的深处,写的时候当然就表现出我们的态度,也就是就是我们对他的批判。这就是我们要说明的,要给予读者的是东西。这就是——篇作品的意义。要是没有这个,那就随他怎样写得好看,也不成其为作品。)

The quotation above shows quite clearly Zhang's belief in the didactic function of literature. By revealing his attitude towards his characters, the writer, in Zhang's conceptualisation of the literary process, hopes to influence the reader into accepting his way of viewing his characters.

'Concerning ethnic forms in literature' 关于文艺的民族形式¹ begins by dealing with the question of the purity of contemporary Chinese literature. Zhang observes that certain alien importations in literature and drama are distinctly out-of-place, and destroy the ethnic flavour of the work itself. He cites as an example the tendency of a playwright friend to borrow the affectation of Western filmstars who shrug their shoulders, a decidedly un-Chinese gesture, and introduce it into his plays.² Another example that Zhang gives is of an author friend describing an old conservative father lecturing his daughter on her behaviour (they live in the countryside it must be noted). The old man says:

"But, my daughter, obedience and virtue are absolutely essential".

(“但是,我的女儿,三从四德非讲就不可的。”)

As Zhang points out, each of the words in the sentence is perfectly conventional Chinese, but when they are put all together in one sentence they become totally uncolloquial, totally un-Chinese. Thus Zhang advocates that only appropriate material should be introduced into works depicting contemporary Chinese

1 Xiandai wenyi 2:1 (25. 10. 1940); 2:2 (25. 11. 1940).

2 Zhang himself wrote about a character who shrugs his shoulders, Xiao Chen in his play 'The Young and the Old are Without Deceit'.

society. He warns against inappropriate comparisons, anachronistic descriptions, and unnecessary reference to natural phenomena. Zhang's short stories are as we have seen perfect exemplars of the practice that he preaches here. One of his most outstanding skills as a writer was his ability to render accurately the speech of many different classes of people from many different areas. Extraneous description and the description of nature are always kept to a minimum in Zhang's works.

In the latter part of 'Concerning ethnic forms in literature' Zhang goes on to elaborate his views on the reception of literature by the reader. He observes:

With a work of literature -- if you want everybody to understand it in the same way, if you want everybody to take the same interest in it, this is in fact something that has always been impossible to achieve.

(一个作品——要任何人都同样看得懂，都同样感到兴味，事实上原是办不到的。)

He goes on to point out that even amongst so-called 'ordinary' readers huge differences can exist; only if what is written in a story coincides with their experiences will they be able to absorb it and appreciate it. Thus Zhang puts forward two ideals: literary works should be appropriate to their readership; and works should faithfully and realistically describe the situations they are attempting to portray, i.e. stories about factory life should appear as true representations of that kind of life.

In the final section of the essay, Zhang acknowledges the need for young Chinese writers to have a thorough grounding in the classics of past ages, but he warns against the practice of closely imitating the antiquated style of such works. Study of literature must be conducted in a vital way. (学习——...., 该是活的学习。) Zhang places as an even higher requirement of would-be writers the need to read literary history; simply reading the classics of the past is not enough. The study of the life and language of ordinary people is also of great importance according to Zhang. Only after one has completed all these prerequisites can one start to write apprentice pieces.

Finally, Zhang points out an area of literary work in which older writers like himself might usefully expend greater energy: the writing of book reviews. Apart from reviews of current works, Zhang also saw a need to reevaluate old classics from a contemporary standpoint, a task that he had already embarked upon by this time.

The last of Zhang's works of this period, dealing with 'literary theory and creative writing', was 'A letter' — 封信 (also published under the title 'In answer to the editor's questions' 答编者问)¹ which deals with five questions about literary creativity raised by the editor of the magazine Wenxue piping. The five questions were as follows:

- i) Based on your experience, in writing fiction, how do works usually begin and end?
- ii) When you discover material, is it the character that comes first or the story?
- iii) Before embarking on a novel, is it essential to have a complete outline or not? And what about a short story? If it is, are there any changes in direction during the course of writing?
- iv) How are the names of people and places decided upon? And how are appearance and dress, situations and characters fitted together?
- v) At the time when you are writing do you often consult your notebook?

(一、根据你的经验,写小说通常是怎样开头怎样结尾的?
 二、发现题材的时候,先有人物还是先有故事?
 三、下笔长篇之前,是否拟有大纲?短篇呢?如果有,在写作过程中还有什么改动没有?
 四、人名地名是怎样取定的?还有,怎样配置脸谱、服饰及场合、人物等等?
 五、写作之际,常常翻阅你的笔记簿吗?)

¹ Wenxue piping 1:1 (1. 9. 1942).

Zhang's answers to these questions are particularly interesting because they are largely based on his own experiences as a writer and since he was addressing himself to questions put forward by someone else a number of his remarks are not to be found in his other works on literary theory.

Addressing himself to the first question about the beginnings and endings of fictional works, Zhang observes that some modern works have no formal beginning, but he goes on to point out that many different new methods of communicating the information traditionally provided by a conventional opening to a work of fiction are now being utilised. Zhang hails this change as an advance. Having dealt quite briefly with beginnings, Zhang goes on to consider endings. He points out that all literary works cannot hope to encompass the whole of human existence, thus confining themselves to a slice of life. Relating his own experience of creative writing, Zhang writes:

If I am afraid some readers will ask "What happens next?" and if I then go on writing and insert another thing [relating to] the central theme and do not end where I should then it becomes, rather, a thing without a conclusion, and the readers do not grasp the significance of what I am trying to put over.

And there is another difficult problem too: if one just goes on writing like this, at what point should one stop? Having written to what point, will it then be possible to prevent the reader from continuing to ask what happened next?

(要是我怕有些读者再问「后来呢」？于是我又往下写，把另一主题的东西镶上去，当结而不结，则反而变成了无尾的东西，而读者也无从领会我在这篇东西里表现的意义是什么了。并且还有一个难题：这么仅写下去，写到那一步为止呢？写到了那里——才可以堵住读者的嘴不再往下问呢？)

Zhang goes on to point out that with both beginnings and endings

there is no fixed method and no fixed place to put them. According to Zhang some writers provide some supplementary information about what happens to their characters after the story has ended whilst other writers leave this to the imagination of their readers, and yet others hint vaguely at what happens subsequently. Zhang considers as failures those works that are written indistinctly without clear beginnings or endings and which do not give the reader a clear indication of the author's intended meaning.

In answer to the editor's second question 'When you discover material, is it the characters that develop first or the story?' Zhang not surprisingly is unhesitant in stating that the characters always come first. Characters develop and grow in Zhang's mind. "As soon as I feel that I have seen his facial expressions and, like a film playing over and over again in my head, I cannot get rid of it, so that I have to write it down, as it were under an impulsion — it is at this point that I consider that my material has come to fruition". (一觉得自己看见了他这些神情,像电影一样反复在我脑子里放映着,都干牠不走,使我有种种冲动似的非写牠不可了——这我就认为这题材算是成熟了。)

Zhang also adds the important rider that having reached this point he still has not even begun to think about the "story" 「故事」. Zhang records that a friend had criticised him because his work was too lacking in respect of story-lines. Zhang acknowledges the truth of his friend's observation. In his defence Zhang puts forward the principle that the function of the story is to illustrate character. The telling of a story may be all very interesting but it will not necessarily assist the portrayal of the character in which Zhang as author is primarily interested.

In answer to the third question, Zhang declares that he never makes use of an outline. Having thought out his main characters, he starts to set pen to paper; he notes that at this point in the creative process, minor characters with supporting roles leap out at him unsolicited demanding their inclusion in the work

at hand. As though to emphasise the unpremeditated nature of his approach to writing, Zhang reveals his difficulty in thinking up titles for his works, and his inability to write a work of a prescribed length. According to Zhang the subject matter always determines whether the resultant work will be a novel or a short story, and this is something that he as author knows intuitively. Sadly, Zhang's blanket response to the first part of the question meant that he did not address himself to the supplementary question about differences between writing novels and writing short stories.

Zhang deals at some length and often in humorously facetious vein with the fourth question. He acknowledges the need for care in choosing appropriate names for characters and avoiding inconsistencies such as weather conditions inappropriate to a particular place or season. Referring to his own practice as a writer, Zhang reports that he consciously avoids highly idiosyncratic regional speech forms on the grounds that only readers from that region will understand what the characters are saying. Zhang's method is to capture the most characteristic and easily comprehensible regional speech forms in order to make his characters discernible representatives of the areas they hail from, without impairing the understanding of the general reader.

Zhang passes off criticism of his reluctance to write about natural scenery as a sign of laziness on his part. He acknowledges meanness with his ink as a failing and reproaches himself for such occasional meanness and laziness. He does, however, decry literary works that describe natural scenery for its own sake.

Zhang disposes of the final question about the frequency with which he refers to his writer's notebooks in a few relatively short paragraphs. Zhang reveals that he uses his notebooks to record words and phrases and only occasionally to note down extensive remarks. He considers his notebooks as aides-mémoires rather than the place to find the first draft of a story.

Zhang finally adds a modest conclusion to his essay,

declaring that he has described his own creative practices and is certainly not advocating that all writers must adhere to his methods.

Zhang's views on literary theory and practice that I have described in the preceding pages throw an interesting light on Zhang's development as a writer of fiction and I propose to return in the concluding chapter to consider the degree to which Zhang's ideas about literary theory are reflected in his own works.

Zhang's last unfinished work of consequence — Golden Duck Empire.

Golden Duck Empire 《金鸭帝国》¹ has a right to be considered as Zhang's last work of consequence because although published in 1938 it was originally intended to be a work of great length and large scope and because the reason why Zhang did not continue to work on it or complete it was his sudden ill-health.

Golden Duck Empire fits into the same category of fiction as Zhang's earlier 'A Diary of Ghostland'. It also bears certain resemblances with 'Little Lin and Big Lin' and has been categorised as a work of 'Children's fiction'.² Zhu Jinshun and Gong Zhaolan in an article about Zhang's works for children had this to say about Golden Duck Empire:

".... in Golden Duck Empire, the cruel oppression of the working classes by landlords and capitalists is revealed. The author picked the children's story format to accurately reflect the reality of a society full of contradictions and conflicts, to teach children to recognise the criminal nature of the old society, to recognise the back-biting and intrigue going on amongst the upper echelons of society at that time".

1 First serialised under the title 'Diguo zhuyi de gushi' 帝国主义的故事 in Shaonian xianfeng 1:1-4, 8-9 (20. 2. 1938 - 20. 6. 1938).

2 See Shen Chengkuan 'Zhang Tianyi zhuzuo jianmu', 张天翼著作简目 in Huacheng 1981:2 (5. 1981); Zhu Jinshun and Gong Zhaolan in their article 张天翼的儿童文学创作 (Ertong wenxue yanjiu 3 (3. 1980) 140-148) also described Golden Duck Empire as a 'children's story' 童话 .

(在长篇童话《金鸭帝国》中,...
揭露了地主、资本家对劳动人民的
残酷剥削。作者采用童话的
形式,真实地反映了充满矛盾
和斗争的社会现实,教育儿童
认识旧社会的罪恶本质,认识
当时社会上层人物间的尔虞我
诈、钩心斗角。)

This analysis is fair as far as it goes. Certainly Zhang's intention in Golden Duck Empire was to instruct his readers as to the evils of imperialism and capitalism. Zhu and Gong do not, however, consider the age-range of Zhang's intended audience; how old were these children that Zhang had in mind? Whilst some of Golden Duck Empire, especially the early parts, would have been easily absorbed by quite young children with fair reading skills, the more sophisticated passages of ideological analysis in the second half of the book could only be appreciated by older teenagers.

The transition from relative simplicity to sophistication is one example of the scrappy way in which Golden Duck Empire appears to have been written. The book occasionally loses its direction or switches suddenly and inexplicably from one set of characters to another.

The first part of the book, for example, deals mainly with the rise of a skilful entrepreneur called Big Dung King 大粪王; later on, the story changes its focus of interest for no discernible reason and begins to describe the exploits of a group of nobles and royals.

The main target of Golden Duck Empire seems not surprisingly to have been Japan — at one point there are references to the eating of raw fish — though Zhang's remarks about his 'imaginary' empire are often sufficiently generalised as to allow the possibility that he had other imperialist powers in mind. Golden Duck Empire has, for example, two political factions: an aristocratic party called the 'Tishoo clique' 喷哈帮 whose overriding characteristic is to sneeze after taking snuff; and

a commoner party called the 'Huhu clique' 呼呼帮 who are always drawing voraciously on cigarettes or cigars. Zhang's description of Golden Duck Empire's society seems to have been based on a mixture of chauvinistic prejudice against other societies and received knowledge about capitalist and imperialist societies. Contrary to the suggestion made by Zhu and Gong,¹ that Zhang was aiming 'to teach children to recognise the criminal nature of the old society', there is no internal evidence to suggest that Zhang had old feudal China in mind, rather his target is more clearly 'abroad'.

Golden Duck Empire is Zhang's most clearly political work. He draws attention to the possible evils and abuses of capitalism. Big Dung King, for example, is out to make a profit no matter what the means, and no matter how many people suffer or lose their livelihood as a consequence. His final aim is to suppress all competition and establish a monopoly.

Zhang's attack on imperialist, capitalist society is not limited exclusively to the consequences of excessive emphasis on the profit motive; he also provides a good laugh at the expense of the leisured classes who display comical indecisiveness:

But man who is born into the world, can never avoid certain troubles. After Lord Geer and his daughter had finished dinner, they encountered an extremely difficult problem: the problem was which post-prandial pastime to indulge in. Was it better to go and see a play, or go and hit a ball about? Or should he take his daughter and grandson out for a walk? He had not resolved this difficult problem by the time he went to bed.

On another occasion there is a description of a funeral:

The entire ceremony was conducted according to aristocratic regulations, a golden duck's egg was painted on the coffin. When the coffin was carried to the grave, a duck led the way, and after the service held in the church, all the mourners had to kiss the duck's bottom,

¹ Zhu Jinshun and Gong Zhaolan, op. cit.

In one respect, at least, Golden Duck Empire is successful in that it does not spend all its length simply denigrating imperialism; it does on occasions put forward positive alternatives. At one point, the threat to install new machinery provokes a revolt, and on another occasion moves are afoot to reform the laws governing working hours and conditions:

It was said that in the law governing the empire's factories it would be laid down -- workers should not exceed ten hours work per day. Women workers would also be prohibited from doing work beyond their physical capabilities. And the hiring of child labourers under the age of twelve would also be prohibited, and at the same time child labourers would only be allowed to work eight hours per day, and they would also be permitted to study.

.... -- and it was also laid down that all the insurance premiums of workers should be paid; like health insurance, accident insurance, and insurance against redundancy. And what was more they also had to give sixty and seventy year old retired workers a pension.

In terms of style, however, Golden Duck Empire represents a step backwards in terms of Zhang's development as a writer of fiction. The book marks no great advance on 'A Diary of Ghostland' or 'Big Lin and Little Lin' exhibiting Zhang's familiar preoccupation with the crude and scatological. Consider for instance this advertisement on a cake-shop window:

These cakes are nutritionally extremely rich, and they are as good as Big Dung King's dung.

(这些点心非常富于滋养料，跟大粪王的粪一样好。)

As in the above two works, Zhang avoids the possibility that the text might appear monotonous by breaking up the narrative with the insertion of a play at one point and the reprinting of a letter at another. As in 'A Diary of Ghostland' there are occasional inappropriately long digressions when Zhang labours

a pet topic. Golden Duck Empire's stylistically most satisfying aspect is its humour. Zhang shows himself most adept at deflating traditional awesomeness by giving his characters ridiculous names (e.g. Gelongdong 格隆冬, Baobuquanpao 保不穿泡, Yalashina 鸭拉屎娜, and Duke Dog's-tail 狗尾公爵) and portraying them doing ridiculous things (e.g. the imperial sport of 'bum-fighting' 鸭斗戏).

That Zhang failed to complete Golden Duck Empire is to be lamented because the work as it stands ends inconsequentially, and because Zhang's conclusions about imperialism remain an unfathomable mystery.

Conclusion

The years 1937 to 1942 mark the zenith of Zhang's development as a writer of fiction and his development as a writer on literary theory. 'Mr. Hua Wei' clearly reveals Zhang's high degree of accomplishment as a writer of short stories. At less than 4,000 characters in length, 'Mr. Hua Wei' is one of Zhang's shortest stories; only 'A Couple of Chums' 朋友俩 and 'A Piece of Female Instruction' 闺训篇 are shorter. 'Mr. Hua Wei' demonstrates how effective a medium the short story can be if wordy description and extraneous detail is ruthlessly discarded and only the bare essentials necessary to tell the story are retained. The Description of Characters and Zhang's other works of criticism and theory written between 1937 and 1942 provide invaluable material on his ideas about literature and the writing process. I shall consider these ideas again in the final concluding chapter when I propose to consider the degree to which Zhang's ideas about literature and the writing process are a reliable index to his own literary practice.

The fact that Zhang's last work of adult fiction was written in September 1938 and published on 1 November 1938 raises an interesting question: why did he stop writing adult fiction from that time onwards? Did Zhang switch to criticism and

theory because he was disillusioned with the reaction to 'Mr. Hua Wei', a standpoint he himself put forward in his essay 'On defects'? Or was it simply that by the end of 1938 Zhang's health was already so poor that he did not have the strength to gather material for and write fiction any longer?

2. The interval of recuperation (1942-1951)

In the autumn of 1942, Zhang became seriously ill with tuberculosis and was forced to stop writing altogether for a considerable length of time. News of Zhang's illness was reported in a Chongqing newspaper Xinmin wankan 《新民晚报》 on 22 April, 1943¹ and a fund was established to raise money to support Zhang during his illness and recuperation. The 5 May, 1943 edition of Chongqing's Xinhua ribao reported that to date the fund had received a total of 10,689 dollars.²

Zhang's precise movements during the years of his convalescence are not certain but the picture that emerges is that in the face of the Japanese advance he left Xiangxiang 湘乡 in Hunan in November, 1944 and moved slowly westwards via Xinhua 新化, Yuanling 沅陵, Qiancheng 乾城 and Pengshui 彭水 before finally reaching Chongqing some time in the early part of 1945. In the summer of 1945, Zhang moved to Chengdu, where he stayed until September or October, 1945. He then took refuge in Pixian 郫县, a small village not far from Chengdu, where he remained until 1948. In August 1948, Zhang's health was sufficiently improved for him to make the journey from Sichuan to Shanghai. Living under an assumed name, Zhang stayed in Shanghai until November, when he travelled to Hong Kong. In Macao, Zhang received effective treatment for a recurrence of his tuberculous condition in the latter part of 1949. Only in May, 1950, was Zhang sufficiently well to make the journey to Beijing.³

1 Shen et al, 张天翼文学活动年表 Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22. 5. 1981) 281.

2 Shen et al, *ibid.*

3 Shen et al., *op. cit.*, 281, 179.

During the years of his convalescence, Zhang received help and sanctuary from friends in the Communist Party and the League of Left-wing Writers. Those who have written reminiscences about Zhang during the years 1942-1951¹ attest to the fact that Zhang spent much of his recuperation rereading old classics like Journey to the West 《西游记》 and Dream of the Red Chamber 《红楼梦》, reading old works like 《大唐慈恩寺三藏法师传》, and even learning a little Esperanto.

The only new literary works written by Zhang to be published during these years were a few fables 寓言 satirising contemporary events and society which appeared in late 1948 and early 1949.² They are all relatively slight works, more in the mould of Zhang's works for children than of his mainstream adult fiction. Zhang's satirical targets included the Guomindang (The Nationalist Party), vain scholars, those who stood on the by-lines of society refusing to take any stand on the issues of the day, Hitler and the Cantonese. The most significant of the fables was a series entitled 'The Tiger Problem' 老虎问题.³ 'The Tiger Problem' pokes fun at the leaders of the Guomindang and their negative thinking; one of the characters in the fable advocates self-sacrifice as a means of appeasing an implacable enemy. (It would of course be equally applicable to Chamberlain's attitude and behaviour towards Hitler).

Zhang's choice of the fable as a vehicle for his literary creativity at this point in his recovery is of considerable significance. First, the shortness of the fable must have proved attractive because the effort and wealth of experiences necessary to write short stories and novels would have been extremely demanding. Secondly, the fabular form was sufficiently

1 Sha Ting, 《张天翼小说选集》, Beijing (7. 1979) i-vi; Jiang Muliang, 《作家印象记》, Sima Wensen, ed., Shanghai (11. 1949) 55-72.

2 Xiaoshuo yuekan 1:4, 5, 2:1, 2, 3 (1. 10. 1948 - 1. 3. 1949); Wenyi shenghuo 7 (15. 10. 1948).

3 The first of the series was published in Xiaoshuo yuekan 1:4 (1. 10. 1948) and sequels appeared in Xiaoshuo yuekan 2:3 (1. 3. 1949).

oblique as to allow the writer to hedge his bets, not committing himself irrevocably to any cause at a time when the outcome of events was still uncertain. The objects of satire were sufficiently indistinct to allow the luxury of another interpretation should events have taken an untoward turn. Thirdly, the fables reveal Zhang turning his hand to a literary form he had not used before. With the benefit of hindsight, these fables can be seen as a logical stepping-stone in Zhang's development towards the writing of highly moral children's fiction in the 1950s. Both the fables and the children's fiction are highly didactic and have strong moral overtones. The question is whether the fables fit logically into the total development of Zhang as a writer of fiction, or whether they are simply a new departure, or an experiment with a new form, or whether they could possibly mark a new beginning for Zhang as a writer. Zhang could have been experimenting with a new form that was popular at the time,¹ but it is also possible that he was 'burnt-out' as a writer of adult fiction after his many years of copious creativity and the long period of serious illness, and the fables represent the first uncertain steps of a writer reborn. Finally, it is worth noting a similarity between some of Zhang's more jocular fables (in fact they are more like humorous anecdotes) and the short humorous pieces Zhang wrote in his teens, such as 'New Poetry' 新诗² and 'Strange Fetishes' 怪癖.³ The same waggish good humour that underlies Zhang's juvenile works is also to be found in a short fable making fun of the way Cantonese people pronounce the word for 'lychees'. To the northern ear it sounds as though they are saying 'laiji' 赖鸡 ('mangy chicken'). Such similarities help to support the idea that these fables mark a new beginning for Zhang as a writer, taking him back to the point at which he first began writing and giving him the opportunity to trace a new direction.

1 His friend Feng Xuefeng 冯雪峰 also wrote fables in the late 1940s.

2 Libai liu 156 (8. 4. 1922).

3 Libai liu 158 (22. 4. 1922).

3. Zhang's post-liberation children's fiction — writing to order (1952-1957).

Unable to make the journey from Hong Kong to Beijing to take part in the first National Delegate Conference of Chinese Workers in the Arts 中华全国文艺工作者第一次代表大会 in July, 1949 because of ill-health, it was not until May, 1950 that Zhang was finally able to travel to Beijing to take up his position as a leading member of the literary establishment. Not long after his arrival in the capital, Zhang started to hold positions in organisations established by the National Writers' League 全国文联.¹ By January, 1951, he was already deputy-director, under Ding Ling, of the Central Literary Research Institute 中央文学研究所, which was under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture and was managed by the National Writers' League. In September, 1953, Zhang took his place as a delegate to the second National Conference of Chinese Workers in the Arts and the following month he was given executive responsibilities in the newly established Chinese Writers' Union.

After his arrival in Beijing, Zhang lived on the premises of the then National Writers' League. In 1953 he became acquainted with Shen Chengkuan 沈承宽, who was working in the literary section of a propaganda department at that time. In 1954, they were married and later that year their daughter Zhang Zhang 张章 was born.

With the improvement in his health, Zhang did not, however, start to write adult fiction once again. He turned his attention instead to the writing of stories and plays for children. Between February, 1952 and April, 1957 five stories and two plays for children were published. Compared with Zhang's pre-1949 literary output, his contribution to the new China's literature is comparatively modest.² Of the five stories, all are quite short

1 The Writers' League was disbanded and reformed in 1953 thereafter becoming known as The Chinese Writers' Union 中国作家协会.

2 The collection Gei haizimen 《给孩子们》, Beijing, Renmin wenxue chubanshe (9. 1959) runs to 221 pages.

with the exception of 'The Secret of the Treasured Gourd' 宝葫芦的秘密¹ the last of Zhang's works of children's fiction to be published and running to 41 chapters and 140 pages in the 1959 Gei haizimen 《给孩子们》 collection. The two plays, 'Rongsheng at Home' 蓉生在家里² and 'Big Grey Wolf' 大灰狼³ are also relatively short in length.

When considering the place of Zhang's post-1949 children's fiction in his development as a writer of fiction, it is necessary to consider the relationship of the post-1949 children's fiction to Zhang's earlier examples of children's fiction like 'Big Lin and Little Lin' 大林和小林⁴ and 'A Strange Place' 奇怪的地方⁵ as well as to Zhang's adult fiction in general. When comparing Zhang's children's fiction written before and after 1949, the most noticeable difference is the change in the social and political background against which the stories are written. Zhang's pre-1949 children's stories concentrate on pointing out the ills and iniquities of society at that time. In 'A Strange Place' the sharp divide between rich and poor is highlighted, and in 'Big Lin and Little Lin' Big Lin's leisured, aristocratic existence is contrasted with the virtuous struggle to survive as exemplified by Little Lin. By contrast Zhang's post-1949 children's fiction assumes an egalitarian society and concentrates on the inculcation of unselfish, self-sacrificing and responsible virtue in the children of the new society. A review of the previous 10 years' literary production published in 1963⁶ has this to say of Zhang's post-1949 children's fiction:

Most of his works of children's fiction deal with the problems that arise during children's lives and during the development of their characters, revealing

1 Renmin wenxue 1957: 1-4 (1-4. 1957).

2 Renmin wenxue 1953: 3 (3. 1953).

3 Renmin wenxue 1957: 7-8 (7. 8. 1953).

4 Beidou 2:1 (20. 1. 1932); 2:3, 4 (20. 7. 1932).

5 Wen ji yuekan 1:1 (1. 6. 1936).

6 Shinianlai de xin Zhongguo wenxue 《十年来的新中国文学》, Beijing, Zuoja chubanshe (11. 1963) 132.

the growing up of the new China's children and their new mental and moral outlook.

(他的儿童文学作品大都是写儿童生活和儿童性格成长中的问题,表现了新中国儿童的成长和他们新的精神道德面貌。)

Clearly the thematic concerns of Zhang's post-1949 children's fiction are very different from the thematic concerns of all his pre-1949 fiction, with the exception of his interest in the conflict between virtue and evil which is to be found in all his works regardless of period.

On a stylistic level, the contrast between Zhang's post-1949 children's fiction and his pre-1949 output is less marked. Examples of works written with differing degrees of realism and fantasy are to be found in both periods. The post-1949 children's fiction displays the same variety of narrative techniques that Zhang's pre-1949 literary practice would lead one to expect. 'Luo Wenying's Story' 罗文应的故事,¹ for example, is framed as a letter addressed by some children to their 'uncles' in the People's Liberation Army; the encapsulation of a story in a letter framework is a common method employed by Zhang in his earliest works of adult fiction.² Even more interesting is the parallel between the story 'Them and Us' 他们和我们 and Zhang's so-called 'agitational' stories of the early 1930s. 'Them and Us' is a story about rival troupes of Young Pioneers 少年先锋队 who abandon unproductive competitiveness in favour of striving after common glory. Where 'Them and Us' resembles such stories as 'The Twenty-one' and 'The Bread Queue' is in its description of an amorphous group of characters rather than concentrating on one particular character who stands out from the rest. 'A Story about not using one's Grey Matter' 不动脑筋的故事³ describes from an anonymous third-person's point of view, a child's recounting of a story

1 Renmin wenzue 1952:2 (2. 1952).

2 cf. 'A Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' and 'Bees'.

3 Possibly written in 1953 and published as a book by Beijing, Zhongguo shaonian ertong chubanshe (1956).

of his own invention, a story fantastic with comic exaggeration. 'A Story about not using one's Grey Matter' is most intriguing from a technical point of view because it throws more light on Zhang's attitude towards fiction and the creative act, an interest that could be noted for the first time in some of Zhang's earliest stories, the detective fiction of the 1920s. The opening sentence of 'A Story about not using one's Grey Matter' shocks because it is unexpected: "One day, an evening of story telling was held, and Zhao Jialin told an extremely uninteresting story." (有一天开故事晚会, 赵家林讲了一个怪没意思的故事。) The shadowy narrator goes on to describe Zhao Jialin's recounting of his story together with the interruptions of his audience. The hero of Zhao Jialin's story, Zhao Dahua 赵大化, is characterised by his self-defeating, all-pervasive laziness. Just when the reader is being encouraged to suspend his disbelief about the unlikeliness of the events described, Zhao Jialin reminds the reader of the fictive nature of his story. A doctor comes to visit Zhao Dahua who complains of back-ache:

The doctor says:

"It's nothing, go and have a good sleep."

He goes to bed, but once again — when he lies on his back, his back aches, and when he lies on his stomach, his stomach aches, and if he lies on his side, his waist hurts. As soon as he gets up, he feels better.

"This is simply the kind of thing that happens in children's stories," the doctor says shaking his head.

"Is there not some odd thing in your bed, eh?"

By reminding the reader of the story's essentially fictive nature, any possibility of illusion is destroyed. The reader is forced to take Zhao Jialin's story at face value. This distinctive approach is further strengthened and developed in a postscript to the story; a fat child who has been listening to Zhao Jialin's story with mounting embarrassment, presumably because of similarities between the character of Zhao Dahua and himself, bursts out:

"I really don't believe it!" That fat child

said hanging his head, "how on earth can people become like that? But this is only a children's story."

He knew everybody was looking at him with smiles on their faces. His face went red, and without looking at anyone, with lowered head he concentrated on sharpening his pencil — in fact the point was still very sharp. He waited until the meeting had broken up, and then catching hold of the brigade leader, he asked softly:

"Tell me, tell me, can people really become like Zhao Dahua?"

Thus although the story is discounted as 'boring' and fantastic, it still comes uncomfortably close to the truth.

'A Story about not using one's Grey Matter' displays an unexpected degree of creative sophistication and makes it comparable with some of Zhang's most novel narrative experiments such as 'Lackadaisical Love Story' 希松的恋爱故事. Its concern with the nature of fiction takes Zhang back to his earliest pre-realist phase of literary creativity and reinforces the impression that Zhang's fables of 1948 and 1949 marked a new beginning in his development as a writer of fiction and that Zhang's post-1949 children's fiction continued this new development taking Zhang along a creative path different to the one upon which he embarked when he first began writing in the early 1920s. This is not to suggest that Zhang forgot all that he had ever learned about the writing of fiction during the course of his long illness, but rather that in the light of his accumulated years of literary experience and in the new atmosphere afforded by the founding of the Communist state in 1949, he was able to return to his earliest literary beginnings and consciously opt for a new, different course of literary development.

Of Zhang's seven post-1949 works for children, 'Going to See a Film' 去看电影,¹ 'Luo Wenying's Story', 'Them and Us' and 'Rongsheng at Home' are all tediously moralistic, insistently advocating the need for children to care for and respect their elders, work hard and behave with exemplary propriety. The

¹ Renmin wenxue 1952:2 (2. 1952).

other three works are, however, distinctive by comparison. 'A Story about not using one's Grey Matter' is exceptional for the reasons explained above. 'The Secret of the Treasured Gourd' is distinctive not only for its length but also for its technique. Unlike the other four works mentioned above 'The Secret of the Treasured Gourd' is not transparently didactic. It describes first-hand a child's fantasy, but it is not until the penultimate chapter, Chapter 40, that it becomes apparent that Wang Bao 王葆 has in fact been dreaming the whole thing. It is only with the revelation of the dream that the didactic Wang Bao 王葆 has in fact been dreaming the whole thing against those children who indulge in the illusion of easy ways to success. He achieves this purpose by revealing the pitfalls that befall Wang Bao when his dream of having a magic gourd whose wish is his command is 'fulfilled.' Confirmation of how cleverly concealed is Zhang's didactic intent is contained in a letter Zhang addressed to his young readers on the occasion of a new edition of The Secret of the Treasured Gourd.¹ In his letter Zhang records the responses of some children to 'The Secret of the Treasured Gourd' during the twenty or so years after its first publication:

Some people ask: "Is the story of the treasured gourd true? If it is not true, what is the point of telling this story?" And other people say: "What a pity the story of the treasured gourd is not true, for if it were true, how marvellous it would be if I had one! Why on earth did Wang Bao smash it and burn it?"

Zhang's play 'Big Grey Wolf' 大灰狼² is interesting for two reasons. First, like Zhang's pre-1949 story 'Big Lin and Little Lin', 'Big Grey Wolf' has both human characters and animal characters who can speak. Secondly, 'Big Grey Wolf' has strong resemblances to the Western children's story 'Little Red Riding Hood'. The Big Grey Wolf of the title tries to ensnare a young six-year-old, intending to eat her, by dressing up and pretending to be the little girl's grandmother. The sly wolf

¹ Zhang's letter is dated July, 1978 and it must be open to question whether he wrote it himself or whether it was ghosted by his wife.

² Renmin wenxue 1953:7-8 (7. 8. 1953).

is outfoxed by the girl's elder sister who manages to lock the wolf into a cupboard. In spite of cribbing a well-known Western plot, Zhang manages to make his characters distinctively Chinese and as a result familiar material becomes demonstrably his own. The repartee between the two magpies who introduce the main part of the play calls to mind the humorous exchanges of "cross-talk" 相声 artists. This draws attention to an underlying characteristic of Zhang's post-1949 children's fiction and to a lesser extent, of all his fiction, namely the way in which Zhang managed to combine elements from Western and Chinese fiction, integrating Western-style plots with Chinese-style narrative.

Finally, it is necessary to deal with the question of whether Zhang wrote children's fiction after 1949 because this was where his interests lay or whether as C. T. Hsia has suggested he was under instructions from the literary establishment to produce exemplary works of children's fiction.¹ Zhang wrote several stories for children before 1949, most notably, 'Big Lin and Little Lin', but also such works as 'A Strange Place' 奇怪的地方 and 'Untitled Story' 失题的故事, and if such works as The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions and Golden Duck Empire are included into the reckoning, then Zhang's pre-1949 works of children's fiction assume a sizeable corpus. Furthermore Ouyang Wenbin 欧阳文彬 reminiscing about Zhang when he was living and teaching in Changsha in 1938, noted that Zhang, who was living alone on an island in the middle of the Xiang river 湘江 at the time, was surrounded by little children who came to play in his house while he was working or writing.² In the light of both Zhang's early interest in writing children's fiction and his known fondness for and ability to get on well with young children, his decision to write works for children after 1949 is not at all surprising. Whether or not he was prompted to write children's fiction upon a suggestion by a member of the literary establishment is open to question.

1 C. T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, 236.

".... the Communist cultural leadership, apparently, has asked Chang T'ien-i [Zhang Tianyi] to specialise in juvenile literature."

2 See Renwu 1981:3 (8. 5. 1981) 118-122.

The only other literary work of significance to come from Zhang's hand after 1949 was a collection of essays entitled Wenxue zaping 《文学杂评》¹ which was first published in 1958. It contained a number of lectures and essays written by Zhang over the previous seven or so years. By and large the essays are empty formulistic criticism of a Marxist type. The essays cover a wide variety of literary interests such as Lu Xun, Chekhov, the 1955 literary campaign against Hu Feng and his supporters, The Journey to the West 《西游记》, and three critical reviews of modern and contemporary love stories. These last three works deal with Deng Youmei's 邓有梅 'On the Precipice' 在悬崖上,² Feng Cun's 丰村 'Beauty' 美丽 and Ding Ling's famous story of the 1930s 'The Diary of Miss Sophie' 莎菲女士的日记. Although each of these three stories are reviewed separately it is noticeable that all three stories reviewed deal with romantic and sexual morality. Zhang reveals no reason for having chosen particularly to review these three short stories. All three can be said to have excited critical and reader interest at the time of their first publication. 'On the Precipice' describes a man who falls in love with a younger woman and is on the point of abandoning his wife for his lover, when his dilemma is solved because his lover rejects him at the end of the story. 'Beauty' poses a moral dilemma: should a high-ranking cadre marry his secretary after his wife's death or not? 'The Diary of Miss Sophie' describes a self-indulgent and over-wrought young woman's love affair with a handsome man, and her final decision to leave town abandoning the consequences of her affair. Zhang acknowledges the strengths of each of the three stories, but also pans their deficiencies, as he sees them. He takes Deng Youmei, the author of 'On the Precipice', to task for not researching his characters thoroughly enough. He objects to 'Beauty' on the grounds that the story is seen exclusively from the point of view of the high-ranking cadre. Zhang is most scathing about 'The Diary of Miss Sophie'; he denies its relevance to and its appreciation of the age in which it was set; he feels

1 Beijing, Zuoja chubanshe (10. 1958).

2 Deng's story was first published in Wenxue yuekan 1956:9 (9. 1956).

it had a retrogressive rather than progressive influence on its readers.¹ Zhang's critical judgements help to further clarify some of his literary ideas. The tenets that Zhang underlined in his pre-1949 works of criticism form the basis for his post-1949 works, but they have been strengthened in his essays by a new philosophical rigour. He declares in his essay 'On reading "Beauty"', for instance:

.... if the author has this kind of standpoint towards life he can sympathise with those things he himself knows full well he ought not to sympathise with. What is meant by "ought not to" here, naturally is derived from inter-personal relationships in our socialist lives, and is derived from the standpoint of rudimentary Communist morality.

In the essays about Hu Feng and his followers, Zhang reiterates the standard party line of the literary establishment at that time.

Zhang's collection of post-1949 critical essays is lacklustre and adds little to one's understanding of his development as a writer of fiction. The book merely confirms Zhang's position in the 1950s as a leading member of the literary hierarchy.

¹ Zhang's review of Ding Ling's story was presumably written as a contribution to the anti-Ding Ling campaign.

Chapter Seven

Zhang's place in the world of short fiction

Introduction

The preceding chapters have made it clear that Zhang's main contribution to Modern Chinese literature is the large body of realist short stories that he produced during the period 1929-1938. It shall be my aim in this concluding chapter to measure Zhang's short stories against the yardstick of the 'modern short story'. This aim is, of course, based on the premise that there is a recognisable and definable literary form that can be designated the 'modern short story' and that this form has international validity.

The 'modern short story'.

Compared with criticism of the novel, literary critical works about the short story as a genre are relatively few and far between. The most noteworthy works of recent years (in English) have all been written by practitioners of the art they describe: H. E. Bates's The Modern Short Story; ¹ Sean O'Faolain's The Short Story; ² and Frank O'Connor's The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story. ³ Whilst these three works all reveal a sure grasp of the practical problems of writing short stories and a keen appreciation of the more successful short story writers of the last hundred years and more, they lack the dispassion that might be expected of the professional literary critic. More recently the most useful and stimulating works on the genre have been a collection of mainly American essays (by practitioners and critics alike) edited by Charles E. May and entitled Short Story Theories ⁴ and Walter Allen's useful survey The Short Story in English. ⁵

1 Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., London, 1941.

2 Collins, London, 1948.

3 Macmillan, London, 1963.

4 Ohio University Press, Ohio, 1976.

5 Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981.

Critical neglect of the genre in China has been almost complete. On the Writing of Short Stories 《论短篇小说创作》,¹ and Discussing the Writing of Short Stories 《谈谈短篇小说的写作》 (by Jun Qing 峻青 and others)² two collections of essays mostly written by practitioners of the art, are exceptions. Another recent exception is a full-length study of the short story genre by Gao Erchun 高尔纯 entitled The Theory and Technique of Short Story Structure 《短篇小说结构理论与技巧》.³ Generally speaking, however, Chinese literary criticism of the last fifty years shows little awareness of generic distinctions between the novel and the short story, with works that describe the processes of creativity grouping novels and short stories under the same banner. We have already observed this failing in Zhang Tianyi's own literary critical works, and it goes some way towards explaining the shortcomings of his attempts at writing novels.

To return, however, to the international currency of the term 'modern short story' one can do worse than quote Walter Allen's opening introductory remarks about the genre:

Everywhere in the world, whenever the short story is discussed, a handful of names crop up, Chekhov and Maupassant always, then Poe and Kipling and Joyce, and probably Katherine Mansfield and Hemingway as well. And this tells us two things. The short story as we think of it today is both an international form and a recent one, essentially a modern form.⁴

H. E. Bates, Sean O'Faolain and Frank O'Connor among others all similarly claim that the short story is an international as well as a modern form. James Cooper Lawrence, meanwhile, has explained why the short story can be regarded as 'truly universal':

The instinct for story-telling exists in substantially the same form in every race; all men recognise and insist upon the simple limitations of brevity and coherence; and hence, in this field of literature more than in any other,

1 Renmin wenxue chubanshe, Beijing, 1979.

2 Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, Shanghai, 1959.

3 Xibei daxue chubanshe, Xian, 1985.

4 Allen, The Short Story in English, 3.

it is possible for an artist to produce masterpieces whose appeal, in spite of national lines and racial characteristics, is truly universal.¹

O'Faolain lists fifteen 'interesting modern writers of short-stories in English' and points out that only three of them are English; the others hail from such places as Ireland, America and South Africa.²

Whilst commentators are keen to point out the long history of the short story both in its written and oral modes, stretching back for more than 2,000 years for Bates and others, all are agreed that the 'modern short story' is a new phenomenon. Turgenev, in a memorable phrase, attributed the provenance of the 'modern short story' to Gogol: "We have all come out from under Gogol's 'Overcoat'." Bates, too, acknowledging Gogol's seminal influence on the 'modern short story', remarked: "He took the short story some way back to the folk-tale and in doing so bound it to earth."³ Frank O'Connor, in trying to analyse why Gogol's 'Overcoat' can claim to mark the birth of the modern short story, wrote:

[Gogol's 'Overcoat'] uses the old rhetorical device of the mock-heroic, but uses it to create a new form that is neither satiric nor heroic, but something in between — something that perhaps finally transcends both. So far as I know, it is the first appearance in fiction of the Little Man, which may define what I mean by the short story better than any terms I may later use about it.⁴

Although Gogol is generally accepted to have provided the cornerstone upon which writers of short stories were subsequently to build, "from many distinguished names two stand out as the pillars of the entire structure of the modern short story:

1 James Cooper Lawrence, 'A Theory of the Short Story', in Charles E. May, ed., Short Story Theories, 71.

2 O'Faolain, The Short Story, 42.

3 Bates, The Modern Short Story, 27

4 O'Connor, The Lonely Voice, 15

Guy de Maupassant, born in 1850, and Anton Pavlovitch Tchekhov [Chekhov], born ten years later." ¹ To this day, Maupassant and Chekhov, are two mighty influences on the development of the 'modern short story', and there are those who would even go so far as to say that writers of short stories can be divided into two camps: those who follow Maupassant; and those who follow Chekhov. It is, however, with the acknowledgement of the importance of Maupassant and Chekhov that critical agreement about the 'modern short story' ends; the various writings on the genre are often sharply conflicting or based on incompatible premises. To cite the most extreme example of diverse opinion, there is not even unanimity that the 'short story' is definable; Ruth Suckow argued in the late twenties that the short story was so variable a form that it defied definition. ² Other critics have acknowledged a high degree of versatility in the form whilst maintaining that it can be confined within definable limits. Unfortunately, attempts to define the 'modern short story' have produced definitions either so broad as to be meaningless or too narrow to have general application. Critics have fallen into the trap of trying to encapsulate all known examples within a definitive framework without taking into consideration the fact that the short story as a genre has been in a state of developmental flux over the past 150 years. The prescriptive criticism of Edgar Allan Poe in the nineteenth century and those who followed his lead, such as Brander Matthews, author of The Philosophy of the Short-story, ³ and many others in the first two decades of this century, produced formulistic critical definitions which could easily contain the outpourings of plot-orientated writers such as O. Henry, but as soon as more adventurous writers such as Hemingway and Joyce broke the mould, such definitions became worthless. The history of short story criticism has been of a hectic chase to accommodate stories that refuse to be so contained within ever more cumbersome working definitions. Valerie Shaw, commenting on this phenomenon, has written:

1 Bates, The Modern Short Story, 73.

2 'The Short Story', Saturday Review of Literature, 4 (19. 11. 1927) 317-318.

3 New York, 1901.

Discussions of the short story have a tendency to bristle with paradoxes, as though no other kind of formulation will do to capture the special delights offered by the genre.¹

If a hard-and-fast definition of the 'modern short story' suitable for applying to all examples of the genre is not a feasible idea, what then is the alternative? Abandoning the ideal of an all-encompassing, universal, prescriptive model for the 'modern short story' two other alternative methods of producing yardsticks present themselves. First, by a careful reading of critical works on the genre, it is possible to build up a generalised picture of the expectations of readers who pick up and read a 'modern short story'. Measuring a particular writer's work against such a yardstick has the advantage of showing up departures from the norm and innovative experiments as well as shortcomings. Secondly, and more ambitiously, one can view the evolution of the 'modern short story' as a continuum that can be basically, but not exclusively, correlated with a temporal axis, so that any given author or an author's creative development can be plotted on the continuum. As both of these yardsticks each possess different advantages and drawbacks, I propose to use both of them in assessing Zhang Tianyi's standing as a writer of the 'modern short story'.

Reader expectations of a 'modern short story'.

First let me attempt to establish the yardstick of the lowest common denominator of reader expectation with regard to the 'modern short story'.

It is of course a truism to say that the most fundamental characteristic of the short story is its shortness. The shortness of the short story has, however, occasioned considerable critical debate and not all of it of a constructive nature. Much unnecessary and unproductive discussion has been devoted to comparing terminology and trying to isolate differences between the 'anecdote, fable, narrative, tale, story, sketch,

¹ Valerie Shaw, 'The Story-telling Impulse: a review of The Short Story in English by Walter Allen', The Times Higher Education Supplement, London, 13. 3. 1981, p.12.

yarn, short fiction'¹, conte, novelette, novella, etc. Fortunately the term 'short story' has gained wide critical acceptance, and makes further discussion of terminology unworth-while. Another point of contention has been raised by those bent on finding upper and lower limits of shortness or length for the short story. Unfortunately, some stories that one would wish to include in the genre are very, very short, whilst others are very long, even to the extent of exceeding in numbers of words the length of the shortest novels.²

If one dispenses with the idea of trying to fix the 'modern short story' within strictly definable word limits, one is left with the quality of brevity that is common to all modern short stories. This quality of brevity refers not to numbers of words but rather to conciseness of presentation and is in fact a stylistic quality that characterises modern short stories. All readers, whether they are aware of it or not, will only accept that a story is a short story if it possesses this quality of brevity. In the past, commentators on the 'modern short story' such as Bates, O'Connor and O'Faolain all referred to this aspect of the genre, linking it with the overriding need on the part of the short story writer to excise any material unnecessary to the unfolding of plot or the comprehension of the reader. Thus the brevity of the 'modern short story' is best seen in terms of spareness of presentation. That this spareness of presentation is of crucial importance to the success or failure of a short story is not difficult to appreciate; we have only to look at the imitators of Lu Xun, Zhang Tianyi amongst them, who wrote many inferior short stories because they were unable to capture the spare, concise style of their master. The drift towards excessive wordiness and unnecessary explanations is the constant danger that faces all writers of the 'modern short story'. At the same time, the mark of the best short stories is the ability to communicate as much effect as possible by using the

¹ Thomas A. Gullason, 'The Short Story: An Underrated Art', Short Story Theories, 13.

² cf. Ian Reid, *op. cit.*, 10. Dr. Reid refers to a short story by Frank Sargeson which is about 32,000 words long and much the same length as some novels by Sargeson.

most economical of means. As far as the effect on the reader is concerned, satisfaction with a given 'modern short story' will be a question of degree, provided that the story obeys the prerequisite of spare execution and does not attempt to explain every event or every action of the characters.

Conciseness apart, other fundamental characteristics of the 'modern short story' can best be assigned to one of two categories: presentation; or content. When an author takes up his pen to write a short story various presentational possibilities are available; for example, the author can use either the first-person or the third-person narrative mode; the time-scale of the story can be consecutive, broken or disjointed; the author can present the inner thoughts of a narrator or simply rely on a combination of dialogue and description. These and other possibilities have, of course, always been available to writers of short stories, but what distinguishes the 'modern short story' from its precursors in this regard is the increasing sophistication and variety of the presentational techniques used. In recent years Isaac Bashevis Singer, for instance, has used what I choose to call an 'askance' presentational method, often making a point by recounting some anecdote or describing some scene at odds with the main thread of the story, achieving an effect by a contrast of opposites.¹ Another manifestation of this increased sophistication in presentation is the apparent casualness of the presentational method used by writers of the 'modern short story'. Whereas the presentational method used by O. Henry now appears contrived and formulistic, those used by his successors often appear to achieve their effects effortlessly and without any noticeable contrivance. The 'modern short story' is, by comparison with the novel, such a slight form that one would expect the techniques used to achieve effects in a short story necessarily to be near the surface and easily to be perceived by the reader, but as a result of the increasingly sophisticated skill of 'modern short story' writers the unavoidable artifice of the form is increasingly well-disguised.

¹ See the title story of Singer's A Crown of Feathers and Other Stories, London, 1977.

Structurally, the most important parts of the 'modern short story' are the beginning and the ending. Unable to indulge in the expansiveness of the novel, the short story writer must at the outset quickly, efficiently and effectively strike a pose, draw the reader close to the subject at hand and build a convincing story using a minimum of materials. The ending of a short story is also of considerable importance because it will colour the attitude of the reader and influence the reader's entire response to what has gone before. One small dissatisfying slip at the end of an otherwise entertaining short story is enough to destroy the fragile structure that has been built up. The crucial nature of the ending of the story is also a consequence of the fact that the 'modern short story' is more than the sum of its constituent parts, almost invariably depending as it does on some final disjunction or reassertion of an old order to trigger some further conceptualising thought in the mind of the reader, which gels all that has gone before and also develops it one stage further.

As regards content, most commentators view the modern short story as presenting a 'slice of life', a realistic vignette acted out by sketchily but realistically portrayed characters which creates the illusion for the reader of a 'whole world'. The only commentator to go further than this is Frank O'Connor who claims that the short story is necessarily peopled by "a submerged population group".¹ Although O'Connor's thesis would presumably preclude short stories about kings and princes, it is nonetheless true that many successful 'modern short stories' describe 'submerged population groups' or "outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society".² Certainly most of the masterpieces by de Maupassant and Chekhov could be said to bear out O'Connor's thesis. Not only this, but subsequent modern short stories including the vast majority produced in China during the 1930s, could also be said to deal with social types on the fringes of society. It is one of the distinctive

1 Frank O'Connor, The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story, 18.

2 O'Connor, 19.

characteristics of the genre that it has flourished most often during times of upheaval and social stress, such as the economic depression of the 1930s, as well as times of rapid change, as at the turn of the century. Even when describing the most lowly or seemingly ordinary of the 'submerged population groups', the 'modern short story' has the knack of making even the unexceptional appear exceptional, and it is presumably this characteristic of the subject matter that commended it to the attention of the author.

In the main, Zhang Tianyi's short stories coincide well with the reader expectations of 'modern short stories' described above. Only occasionally, as in the story 'Wanren Association', do Zhang's stories fail to meet expectation by being excessively wordy; or, as is the case with the story 'Counter Offensive', lose their way because the author is uncertain of his objective.

The developmental continuum of the 'modern short story' and Zhang's place in it.

My thesis that a developmental continuum for the 'modern short story' can be established and that the works of selected writers of the genre can be plotted on the continuum is based on the underlying premise that the 'modern short story' is an international and easily recognisable literary form, that had its beginnings in Gogol's short story 'The Overcoat' and in principles laid down by Edgar Allan Poe in 1842 in his review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales. Subsequently the two most formative influences on the development of the genre were Chekhov and de Maupassant and their influence on subsequent writers can still be felt to this day. As a result of the influence of the works of Chekhov and de Maupassant, subsequent writers of the 'modern short story' moved away from the depiction of "fancified, human beings" to the interpretation of ordinary human beings.¹ As already noted, in O'Connor's estimation these 'ordinary human beings' represent "a submerged population group". "That

¹ H. E. Bates, The Modern Short Story, 33.

submerged population changes its character from writer to writer, from generation to generation." ¹ Although O'Connor acknowledges changes from generation to generation, his view of the short story as a genre is essentially of a static phenomenon. The philosophy underlying his remarks is clear; "it [the short story] began, and continues to function, as a private art" "In fact the short story has never had a hero", and so on. ² It is only when discussing individual writers that O'Connor admits development and change. Even then, however, he sees change as leading a writer away from the genre, as in his comments about Joyce whom he had earlier acknowledged as "a genuine storyteller with a unique personal vision":

Already as a storyteller Joyce has reached a parting of the ways; he has excluded certain material from his stories. In doing so, he has made a mistake that is fatal to the storyteller. He has deprived his submerged population of autonomy. ³

The case for the 'modern short story' to be regarded as a developing genre is given its most cogent expression in Richard Kostelanetz's essay 'Notes on the American Short Story Today'. ⁴ Tracing the origins of the short story, Kostelanetz has written: "In the great modern short stories, the techniques of representation stem not from realism, which emulates reportage, but from symbolism, which descends from poetry." ⁵ More usefully, he points to an historic development in the structure of the short story:

The revolution against literary realism corresponds to a shift in the structure of the short story. The traditional mode was linear development: things happened realistically, in credible and usually chronological succession, until the story created a pattern of expectation that was concluded by the story's logical end (or sometimes undercut by an equally credible, but less predictable, reversal). Whereas the

1 Frank O'Connor, The Lonely Voice, 18.

2 Frank O'Connor, The Lonely Voice, 13, 17.

3 Frank O'Connor, The Lonely Voice, 120.

4 Charles E. May, ed., Short Story Theories, 214 ff.

5 *ibid*, 215.

old short story (whose doddering contemporary heirs are the mystery and the pulp-slick) emphasised the ending (which packed as much surprise and moral punch as possible), the modern short story emphasises the middle¹

Thus, although there is not unanimity that the 'modern short story' has over the last hundred and more years been in a state of developmental flux, it can be seen that Kostelanetz's remarks, just quoted, accurately mirror Zhang Tianyi's development as a writer of short stories. As we have already noted Zhang's earliest stories employ the traditional mode of linear development; even Zhang's avant garde experiments with 'symbolism' in the late 1920s hold firmly to linear development whatever fashionable tricks they may display. As his works matured the predictable switch in emphasis away from the ending and towards the middle took place. If we compare the ending of 'The Bao Family, Father and Son' with the ending of 'Mr. Hua Wei' this is clearly apparent. The ending of the former story finds Old Mr. Bao collapsed on the ground on his bottom in despair, finally irretrievably broken in spirit after a chapter of setbacks whereas 'Mr. Hua Wei' begins and ends in the middle, and the last line promises only more of the same rather than some climactic change. That Zhang's corpus of short stories taken as a whole display a progressive development in technique is not hard to prove; what is more difficult is deciding Zhang's place in the continuum of short story writers and their creations.

We must remember that though the 'modern short story' as written in China this century is cognate with the genre's manifestations in other countries, the factors affecting the development of the genre in China are unique. Largely dependent on what foreign literature was translated into Chinese in the early part of this century or what foreign languages practitioners of the genre could read, the development of the 'modern short story' as a genre in China, was necessarily slower than in other countries. Lu Xun provides the best and most well-researched example of a Chinese modern short story writer.

¹ Kostelanetz, 'Notes on the American Short Story Today', Short Story Theories, 216.

Patrick Hanan in his article 'The Techniques of Lu Hsun's [Lu Xun] Fiction'¹ considered the direct foreign literary influences on Lu Xun's short stories:

Among the Russian writers, Andreev was Lu Hsun's chief passion. There was also the brilliant writer of short stories, Garshin. Others are Lermontov, Chëkhov, Korolenko, and of course Gogol Among Polish writers, Sienkiewicz was his chief liking. Among Czech writers Lu Hsun liked Neruda and Vrchlicky. He had no interest in the French Realists or Naturalists, or the Japanese Naturalists. His favourite Japanese writer was Sōseki.

Hanan puts forward a convincing case for thinking that the chief influence on Lu Xun's earliest short stories was Andreev, and that only after the publication of Lu Xun's third story 'Medicine'
药 did he escape from the influence of foreign writers.

In this regard Zhang Tianyi was clearly the heir of the tradition established by Lu Xun. In Edgar Snow's anthology Living China² Zhang wrote in an autobiographical sketch:

The authors who have influenced me most are Charles Dickens, Guy de Maupassant, Emile Zola, H. Barbusse, Leo Tolstoy, A. Chekhov, Maxim Gorki, and Lu Hsun. New works from Soviet Russia, especially A. Fadeyev's Razgrom (translated into English as The Nineteen), have also greatly influenced me.

Zhang's inclusion of de Maupassant and Chekhov amongst authors who influenced him most is reassuring since it places Zhang in the developmental mainstream of the 'modern short story'. The influence of 'new works from Soviet Russia' and the singling out of Lu Xun as the sole Chinese author to have had a great influence on him suggests that the development of Zhang and Lu Xun as writers of short stories have important

1 Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 34 (1974) 53-96.

2 London, 10. 1936.

parallels.¹

As the second chapter of this thesis has demonstrated, Zhang's development as a writer of short stories was by no means a direct or uneventful progress. Zhang apparently came to the 'modern short story' by way of the detective story (or in Kostelanetz's phrase 'the old short story whose doddering contemporary heirs are the mystery and the pulp-slick'), and the fashionable interest in 'symbolism' current in the mid 1920s in China. He consciously turned his back on these early influences (to be sure he learned a trick or two from his experiments with the detective story) and concentrated his efforts on mastering the modern realist short story.

Bearing in mind that there was probably usually a time lag of at least five to ten years between a development in the 'modern short story' in Europe and America and a reaction to it in China, the general climate of short story writing in China as practised by Lu Xun and those who succeeded him is probably best compared with H. E. Bates's comments on a much earlier period in the West: "Turning from Wells and Kipling to the general scene of late nineteenth-century short-story writing, is to be struck by an interesting fact. There is no collective trend; writers are allied in no movement. All, it is true, are occupied by the production of stories which are examples of active rather than passive types of narration."² Bates's remark about active rather than passive narration can be applied to most of Zhang's early output (the stories up until 1935) but his remark about 'no collective trend' must be moderated by pointing out the move towards socialist realism exhibited by short story writers in 1930s China. Another useful opportunity

1 Similarities between Lu Xun and other writers of modern Chinese fiction tend to be played up by Chinese literary critics because of the high esteem in which Lu Xun is held. In this respect Wu Fuhui's article about Zhang Tianyi's fiction, 论张天翼艺术, 锋利·新鲜·夸张——试论张天翼艺术, Wenxue pinglun 1980:5 (15. 9. 1980), is a good example of the eulogistic school of criticism.

2 H. E. Bates, The Modern Short Story, 117.

for comparison is afforded by the overview of developments in the American short story provided by Kostelanetz. For the purpose of comparing the short story in 1920s China, his remarks about the pre-1920 short stories of Henry James, Ambrose Bierce and Edith Wharton are instructive:

.... the pace of the story is leisurely; most of the important events and thoughts, as well as themes, are fairly explicitly presented; the characters are more exceptional than average; the story's meaning emerges from its surface action; the presentation of events is strictly chronological; the representational mode is a realism seemingly calculated to produce a shock of familiar recognition; the narrator is (except in James) always omniscient; the tone and plot are fairly optimistic, if not moralistic; and the end of the story coincides with the logical termination of the action.¹

On most of these counts Zhang's stories written before 1937 measure up. Exceptions to this general rule of thumb include stories that do not present events strictly chronologically like 'Counter Offensive' and 'Moving on', and stories whose tone and plot are not optimistic like 'A Prosperous Year' and 'A Common Occurrence'. Other stories like 'Lackadaisical Love Story' are out of the ordinary and defy simple categorisation. Having made these disclaimers, it is certainly true that most of Zhang's stories written between 1929 and 1936 obey the conditions laid down by Kostelanetz.

If one goes on to consider Kostelanetz's postulations for the short stories of the 1920s, for which the representative writers he picked out are Hemingway, Faulkner and Katherine Anne Porter one finds:

.... the action is greatly pruned until the story appears rather plotless. Yet every detail serves an artistic function; nothing seems unconsidered or accidental. The short stories in the Twenties exhibit greater emotional complexity and ambiguity, as well as a more discriminating sense of emphasis and an increased brevity of representation (in short, a

¹ Kostelanetz, 'Notes on the American Short Story Today', Short Story Theories, 219.

modified, more selective, realism). Their authors let the crucial thoughts and themes remain implicit and elusive, often presenting them in symbolic form; chronology is distorted, usually through flashbacks; the overall attitude is unsentimental, if not aggressively pessimistic; and the characters emerge as fairly undistinguished, typical people who seem, nonetheless, hardly attached either to each other or to traditional social institutions. Instead of concentrating on plot development, the authors resort to rhetorical strategies of parallelism and repetition; the narrator often speaks in the first person and may be a major participant in the action rather than just an observer of it; and the story's end comes as an anticlimax after the earlier epiphany.¹

If Lu Xun's short stories are compared with Kostelanetz's description above, surprising similarities become apparent. His story 'Kong Yiji' 孔乙己, for instance, 'is greatly pruned', and in it 'every detail serves an artistic function'; there is extreme 'brevity of representation'; the character Kong Yiji emerges as 'fairly undistinguished' and detached from 'traditional social institutions'; Lu Xun certainly resorts to 'rhetorical strategies of parallelism and repetition'; the narrator 'speaks in the first person' and is not merely an observer of the action. The same can be said of many of Lu Xun's other stories. When, however, we come to consider Zhang Tianyi's short stories against Kostelanetz's description, the result is quite different. Most of Zhang's stories lack the 'increased brevity of representation' stressed by Kostelanetz. Rarely do they use 'rhetorical strategies of parallelism and repetition' (repetition is almost invariably used to intensify character description). Many of Zhang's early stories have first person narrators but they are simply observers of the action; most of the later stories have impersonal third person narrators. Most of the endings to Zhang's short stories are better described as the nadir of a pessimistic plunge rather than a climax or anticlimax.

¹ Kostelanetz, 'Notes on the American Short Story Today', Short Story Theories, 219-220.

Thus Lu Xun's short stories stand comparison with the works of Hemingway, Faulkner, and Katherine Anne Porter, whereas Zhang's stories belong to an earlier less sophisticated era. Zhang's place in the developmental continuum is in the train of Chekhov and de Maupassant but falling short of the developmental mark achieved by Lu Xun.

The degree of correlation between Zhang's avowed literary ideals and his literary practice.

Whilst Zhang's stress in his literary theoretical works of the early 1940s on the importance of characters in short stories coincides well with the evidence provided by most of his mature fiction, some of the earlier stories that are categorised as 'agitational' such as 'The Last Train' and 'The Road', as well as those with overbearing narrators such as 'San taiye and Guisheng' show every sign of being more preoccupied with plot than with character. This apart, Zhang's remarks concerning the importance of distinct endings and beginnings to stories (and his works are fine examples of this) place him firmly in the conservative mainstream of short story writers of the twentieth century.

In 'Concerning ethnic forms in literature', Zhang decried excessive description of natural scenery and as a writer he made very little use of such description in his works. Only occasionally such as in the contemplative story 'The Dream' is use made of nature descriptions and in such cases the purpose is always to communicate mood. Thus, dark clouds in the sky signal trouble for the agents of the story.

Zhang's remarks in 'A letter' on the subject of his own method of literary creativity, namely the contemplation of a character who grows and develops in his mind until finally dictating the plot, is exactly mirrored by remarks made by the contemporary English short story writer, Susan Hill, in a radio broadcast:

If I've got an idea in my mind, if I know that I'm going to write about certain characters in a certain situation, I'm on and off all the time going back to them and thinking about what they are going to say, what they're doing, what their feelings are, what's happening to them. And it's almost as though I wind them up for five minutes and start them off and see what's happening.¹

The distinctively Chinese characteristics of Zhang's fiction.

Unsurprisingly, the effective representation of early 20th century Chinese society is the single most distinctively Chinese characteristic of Zhang's fiction. Zhang's short stories and the novels One Year and The Pulse of the Age have about them the 'ring of truth' which gives the reader the impression that they represent faithfully the society and the time they purport to describe. There have, however, been Chinese critics, notably Wang Shuming and Wang Xiyan, who have taken Zhang to task for not adequately portraying contemporary Chinese society. Wang Shuming found Zhang's The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions an unsatisfactory work because in describing one small section of the Chinese populace living in the anachronistic world of the Shanghai foreign concessions, he felt Zhang was distorting and insufficiently representing current circumstances. Wang Shuming also expressed dissatisfaction with the cross-sections of Chinese society portrayed in One Year and The Pulse of the Age. In Wang Xiyan's estimation, Zhang's fiction shows an insufficiently deep understanding of contemporary society as well as a tendency to be inadequately researched.

Significantly, Wang Shuming's criticism is confined to Zhang's novels, a genre we have noted where Zhang was almost invariably suspect. The basis for Wang Xiyan's criticism lies in Zhang's shortage of works dealing with rural life; he felt that Zhang knew the educated urban classes best and thus wrote most effectively about them. It is certainly true that the

1 "How to write a Short Story", prod. Jenny Hargreaves, B.B.C. World Service, 12. 12. 1982.

vast majority of Zhang's short stories have urban or small town settings; very few deal with country matters and farming communities. Zhang Tianyi's stories do not attempt to represent peasant life, but where their strength lies is in the communication of an atmosphere, providing insights into the way of life of the people at that time (albeit city and town dwellers) and communicating the mood of those people.

The distinctively Chinese flavour of Zhang's stories and longer works has its roots in the ancient tradition of storytelling in China — the professional story-teller in the marketplace or tea-house — and manifests itself in a rumbustious style of narration. This style of narration is most clearly apparent in stories like 'Lackadaisical Love Story' where the posturing narrator invites the reader to share in a pleasurable experience. In other of Zhang's works, the narrative style invokes the techniques of traditional vernacular fiction, best exemplified by the button-holing technique of the phrase "Gentlemen readers"

讀者諸君。

APPENDIX A

Biography of Zhang Tianyi

Biography of Zhang Tianyi

1. Sources

Until recently biographical and autobiographical information about Zhang has been scant. With the publication of 'Zhang Tianyi wenxue huodong nianbiao' 张天翼文学活动年表, Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22. 5. 1981) 272-281, 179, compiled by Shen Chengkuan, Huang Houying and Wu Fuhui, many of the gaps in Zhang's biography have been filled. This then is the primary source of which I have made use in writing the following biographical sketch.

I should, however, point out that this most recent and comprehensive account of Zhang's activities does not always tally with other sources and where inconsistencies have arisen I have exercised my own judgement in selecting the most reliable information available. Where difficulties have arisen in choosing between conflicting accounts, I have drawn attention to the problem in footnotes.

Other sources which I have utilised include the following works, arranged alphabetically by author:

- Anonymous : Liushi nian wenyi dashi ji 1919-1979
《六十年文艺大事记1919-1979》(10. 1979)
- : Xiandai Zhongguo renming cidian
《现代中国人名辞典》(30. 11. 1981) 615
- : Zhong gong renming lu 《中共人名录》
(8. 1968) 349
- : Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian, xiandai diyi fence 《中国文学家辞典
现代第一分册》(9. 1979) 260-262
- Boorman : Biographical Dictionary of Republican China
Vol. 1 (1967) 114-115
- Cao Ming : Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22. 5. 1981)
129-130, 128
- Fokkema, D.W. : Literary Doctrine in China and Soviet
Influence 1956-1960 (1965) 156

- Jiang Muliang : Zuojia yinxiang ji 《作家印象记》
(ed. Sima Wensen 司马文森)
(11. 1949) 55-72
- Jiang Tianzuo : Hua cheng 1981:2 (5. 1981) 99-101, 107
- Ouyang Wenbin : Renwu 1981:3 (8. 5. 1981) 118-122
- Perleberg : Who's Who in Modern China (1954) 14
- Sha Ting : Zhang Tianyi xiaoshuo xuanji
《张天翼小说选集》(7. 1979) i-vi
- Sun Yu : Wen hui bao (20. 1. 1981)
- Wang Xiyan : Furong 1981:3 (9. 1981) 216-228
- Wu Zuxiang : Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22. 5. 1981) 122-128
- Ya Cheng : Kai juan 3:7 (12. 1980) 56
- Zhang Dajun : Zhong gong renming dian 《中共人名典》
(1956) 121
- Zhang Tianyi : Wenxue zazhi 1:2 (15. 5. 1933) 61-66
: Living China (ed. Edgar Snow) (10. 1936)
265, 266
: Dushu yuebao (12. 1. 1958) 19
: Zhongguo dangdai zuojia zizhuan 《中国
当代作家自传》Vol. 2 (10. 1979) 148
: Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan 1980:2
(9. 1980) 276-280
: Zhongguo xiandai zuojiazhuan lue, diter ji
《中国现代作家传略(第二辑)》
(10. 1979) 148-150
- Zhao Jiabi : Xin wenxue shiliao 1980:1 (22. 2. 1980) 52-58
- Zhao Jingshen : Wenren jianying 《文人剪影》
(4. 1936) 21-22
- Zhou Songdi : Hua cheng 1981:2 (5. 1981) 93-98

I have also made use of biographical information imparted to me in personal interviews with Zhang's wife Shen Chengkuan, Zhang's daughter Zhang Zhang 张章, and his old friends Wang Xiyan 王西彦, Wu Zuxiang 吴组湘 and Tang Tao 唐弢.

2. Biography

Zhang Tianyi was born in Nanjing on 26 September 1906.¹ The name given to him at birth was Yuanding 元定 and alternative names that he assumed were Yizhi 一之, Huanzhi 焕之, Yangwu 养吾. In the home he was also known as Handi 汉弟.² At one time or another Zhang used the following literary pseudonyms: Zhang Wuzheng 张无净, Tie Chihan 铁池翰, Mouhan 某汉, Laokua 老夸, Hamichi 哈迷蚩.

His family originally came from Xiangxiang 湘乡 in Hunan. An old and distinguished Hunanese family though Zhang's was, it began to decline after his grandfather's generation.³

Zhang's father, Zhang Tongmo 张通模 was a fairly enlightened intellectual and he had a considerable influence on his son.⁴

Zhang's family depended on the money his father earned as a teacher, minor official and in his later years calligrapher.⁵ The family moved often in the area of Nanjing, Shanghai and Hangzhou in order that his father might find employment. Zhang wrote of his father: "He was a humorous old man, who loved to make satirical remarks. He did not want his children to be like himself, 'their generation is considerably more advanced than our generation'"⁶

1 Shen, 272. Other sources suggest different dates: Anon, Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian, 260 suggests 10 September 1906; Boorman, 114 suggests 1907; Zhang, Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan, 276 also specifies 10 September 1906.

2 Shen, 272; Jiang Muliang, 58.

3 Zhang, Living China, 265.

4 Shen, 272; Jiang Muliang, 55. According to Boorman, 114 Zhang's father's name was Zhang Bochun (no characters are given), one of five brothers, all of whom held the rank of 'juren'.

5 Zhou, 93; according to Boorman, 114, Zhang's father served as education commissioner in Nanjing.

6 Zhang; Wenxue zazhi, 61.

Zhang's mother Wei Maoxian 魏茂先 was from an educated family.¹ Zhang wrote of her: "Mother was a woman full of feeling, she often told us stories; on one occasion she read us Lin Jinnan's translation of Dickens's Old Curiosity Shop, which was so moving that it made us weep.... She was also someone of the utmost self-confidence; she always wanted to try her hand at everything."²

Zhang was the fifteenth and youngest child³ in his family, with five brothers and sisters in his immediate family; by the time Zhang was a few years old, most of his brothers and sisters were already grown up and had left home. His eldest brother was Zhang Yuanqian 张元潜, the second eldest brother was Zhang Yuanxian 张元宪.⁴ Zhang's eldest sister died young. His second eldest sister Zhang Jiamei 张稼梅 was a progressive woman of the May Fourth era.⁵ Although she was sixteen years Zhang's senior, she exerted according to Zhang a very great influence on him in his formative years. Writing about her, Zhang recalled: "She wrote letters informing me of lots of things, and singled out some books for me to take a look at. She loved to tell rambling jokes, and describe people, always plumbing the depths of other people. But if all of a sudden she became serious then she was dreadfully serious."⁶

1 According to Boorman, 114, Zhang's mother's name was He Yixiao (no characters given), and was an esteemed poetess in her native Hunan.

2 Zhang, Wenxue zazhi, 61

3 According to Wang, 218, recalling the time that he and Zhang worked on the Guancha ribao in Shaoyang in 1938, Zhang's younger brother also worked with them at that time.

4 According to Boorman, 114, one of Zhang's elder sisters was called Zhang Mojun (orig. 张昭汉); Perleberg, 14, gives the characters as 张默君.

5 All the above information about Zhang's brothers and sisters is to be found in Shen, 272.

6 Zhang, Wenxue zazhi, 62

When in April 1912, the government temporarily moved north to Beijing, Zhang's father became unemployed. He and the rest of the family left Nanjing, and moved from place to place in the area around Shanghai as his father searched for employment. When this proved unsuccessful, the family finally settled in Hangzhou.¹

Whilst they had been living in Nanjing in 1912, Zhang had started to attend a primary school, but after a short time when the family moved to Hangzhou Zhang changed schools and entered Xianli higher primary school at Hangxian 杭县县立高等小学校. His primary school classes were allegedly steeped in the ancient classics like Mencius and there was not the slightest spark of life in the classes. They merely served to provoke repugnance in the children.² "There weren't any classes that I was good at, I was only adept at fighting with my classmates and telling stories."³

By 1918, Zhang was in senior primary school, after experiencing several interruptions in his education. The school made the students read Confucius' Lun yu 《论语》 for their moral education. Outside class he started to read popular classics such as Shuo Yue 《说岳》, Yangjia jiang 《杨家将》, Xi you ji 《西游记》, San guo yanyi 《三国演义》, Shuihu zhuan 《水浒传》, Peng gongan 《彭公案》 and the like. Although very mischievous in school, he did however love to read. There were a lot of old string-bound books at home, and he took them all out in turn and read them.

Receiving some instruction at home, he became adept at calligraphy. Recalling his early schooldays Zhang wrote: "There wasn't one subject at which I excelled, but the teachers said that in the future I could become a calligrapher."⁴

1 Shen, 272.

2 Shen, 272.

3 Zhang, Wenxue zazhi.

4 Zhang, Wenxue zazhi, 64.

In 1920, Zhang left Hangxian prefectural higher primary school and entered Zongwen Middle School in Hangzhou 杭州 私立宗文中学. This school was one of only two privately run secondary schools in the area catering purely for boys and run by Chinese rather than foreigners. Zhou Songdi in a recent reminiscence about Zhang recalled how he and Zhang were in the same class at Zongwen Middle School from the autumn of 1922 until 1924. He also recalled that Zhang was the youngest in a class of about thirty and probably because of his tender years, Zhang was very mischievous and vivacious. Zhang was good at telling stories and mimicking the teachers' voices and actions.¹ The headmaster of the school was well-known for his opposition to literature written in the vernacular and most of the teaching material was rather stale and uninteresting written as it was in the literary language.² In the Chinese language classes, the students were, however, given the opportunity to choose whether they wrote compositions in the classical language or in the vernacular. Zhang wrote highly imaginative essays and stories in a distinctive style, for which he was awarded low marks.³ Recalling his days at Zongwen Middle School, Zhang wrote: "We would act as though there was no-one on the teacher's rostrum, reading novels and writing letters. I would fight with the people sitting beside me."⁴ During this time, Zhang became an aficionado of Lin Shu's 林纾 translations of Western novels. He also read a lot of detective stories and began to practise literary composition.⁵ Amongst Zhang's classmates were Pan Zhenwu 潘振武 and Ma Tiankui 马天骥 (whose literary pseudonym was Ma Juanhun 马鹃魂) who were particularly interested in literature and writing. Ma Tiankui wrote romantic stories for 'Mandarin Duck and Butterfly' magazines. Amongst the students a year above Zhang were Dai Chaosheng 戴朝胜 (who later attained fame as the poet Dai Wangshu 戴望舒) and Dai Kechong 戴克崇 (the poet Du Heng 杜衡).⁶ In the autumn

1 Zhou, 93

2 Shen, 273

3 Zhou, 94

4 Zhang, Wenxue zazhi.

5 Shen, 273

6 Zhou, 94

of 1922, Zhang together with these two schoolmates Dai Wangshu and Du Heng and a student at Zhejiang University 浙江大学 Shi Zhecun 施蛰存 started up a small literary gazette.¹ Under the influence of Lin Shu's translations and writers of the 'Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School', Zhang and some of his classmates sent stories to 'Mandarin Duck and Butterfly' magazines in Shanghai.²

On 8 April 1922, Zhang's earliest work so far discovered, a short story called 'New Poetry' was published in the 156th edition of Libai liu magazine. He used as his pseudonym Zhang Wuzheng 张无诤 and wrote on the manuscript his disinclination to be paid for the work ('不受酬'). Subsequently Zhang had a lot of stories and some small articles published in Shanghai 'Mandarin Duck and Butterfly' magazines like Libai liu, Banyue, Xingqi and Zhentan shijie. Of the stories that he had published in these magazines, the majority were detective stories with Xu Changyun 徐常云 as the investigating hero.

In the summer of 1924, Zhang graduated from Hangzhou's Zongwen middle school.³ In the autumn, he entered the Fine Arts Academy in Shanghai 上海美术学院 where he studied painting for almost a year. Zhou Songdi in his reminiscence about Zhang finds it hard to understand why Zhang should suddenly have decided to pursue a course of study in painting but does point out Zhang's skill at calligraphy and acknowledges that Zhang sometimes drew caricatures and sketches while at school. Apparently Zhang could write 'hollow' character calligraphy 空心字 and mirror-image calligraphy.⁴ Finding the fees too high and dissatisfied with

1 No trace of this gazette can now be found.

2 Shen, 273.

3 Shen, 273; according to Zhou, 94 they did not graduate from Middle school until the autumn of 1924.

4 According to Shen, 272, Zhang had loved painting from an early age.

the curriculum, Zhang stopped studying painting in Shanghai and returned to Hangzhou.

In the autumn of 1925, he moved to Beijing where he lived at the home of his second eldest sister, Zhang Jiamei. He took courses to prepare him to take the entrance examination to Peking University. Meanwhile he continued to practise writing fiction.¹

In the following year, 1926, Zhang successfully passed the entrance examination to Peking University's No. 1 College 北京大学第一院, which taught Arts subjects. Zhang moved into a flat near the University which was at this time situated at Sha tan 沙滩. During this period at university, Zhang often discussed literature and art with his friends who included fellow students Zhou Songdi and Pan Zhenwu (both of whom had attended Zongwen Middle school in Hangzhou with Zhang), Pan Shun 潘训, Rou shi 柔石, Feng Xuefeng 冯雪峰, Wu Guangyu 邬光煜 and Yao Pengzi 姚蓬子.²

By this time, according to Zhou Songdi, the direction that Zhang was to follow in literature was already quite clear. He did not advocate 'Art for Art's Sake' in literature, feeling that literature ought to be based on fact, reflecting human existence, and describing humanity. He was full of praise for Lu Xun's fiction like 'Diary of a Madman' 狂人日记, 'The True Story of A Q' 阿Q正传, et cetera. Zhang made frequent mention of the classic epic novels The Scholars 《儒林外史》 and Journey to the West 《西游记》. As for nineteenth century European writers, Zhang most admired Gogol, and after Gogol he admired Chekhov and Maupassant.³

1 Shen, 272; according to Zhou, 94, Zhang sent him a copy of a story either at the end of 1924 or in the spring of 1925. The story which was about 10,000 characters long had as its title something like 'A Gaggle of Geese' "一群鹅" (Zhou cannot remember precisely) and satirised boastful people in the academic world, likening them to a 'gaggle of geese'. Zhou declares Zhang's satirical style in this story to be similar to that to be found in his subsequent satirical fiction and children's fiction.

2 Zhou, 94, 95.

3 Zhou, 95.

In 1926 and 1927, three short stories in the symbolist style written by Zhang, appeared in Beijing newspapers. It was from this time onwards that he started to use the pseudonym Zhang Tianyi 张天翼, discarding the earlier Zhang Wuzheng 张无诤.¹

Whilst attending Peking University Zhang started to read books that propagated Marxism and came into contact with progressive students. Zhang and his circle of friends at Peking University were all agreed about the need to end imperialism, topple war-lords and unify China.² Looking back on this time in a recent autobiographical sketch, Zhang wrote: "During this period I was very depressed. I felt there were a lot of problems in the world (the problems of life, revolution, love and so on) which I did not know how to resolve. I denied the efficacy of literature and art, feeling that they had no connection with real life, but my interest still lay in the arts. I thought of studying science, but my mathematics and physics were too poor. At Peking University I could not study the things I wanted to study either. Because of this, I sometimes doubted everything, denied the existence of everything, and sometimes I felt too that there was no alternative to revolution I felt intuitively that if there was to be revolution then it was necessary to destroy the difference between rich and poor, even to the extent of destroying all government."³

Either at the end of 1926 or early in 1927, Zhang joined the Chinese Communist Party.⁴

1 According to Zhou, 95, Zhang selected the pseudonym from a passage in Zhuangzi 《庄子·逍遥游》：“有鸟焉，其名为鹏，背若泰山，翼若垂天之云，抟扶摇羊角而上者九万里。”

2 Zhou, 96

3 Zhang, Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan, 276.

4 Zhou, 96; according to Zhang, Living China, 265, "It was then (1924) that I began to have definitely my new belief (indicating Marxism) and gradually to grasp that single truth of history."

In the spring of 1927, Zhang left Beijing and went South.¹ He left Peking University without finishing his course. Zhou Songdi posits that it was at this time that Zhang had a job on the staff of a newspaper in Nanjing or its environs.²

From the beginning of 1928 for two years Zhang was frequently on the move in the area around Shanghai and Nanjing. During this time he had jobs as family tutor, copy-clerk, reporter, newspaper editor and office clerk. He probably spent more of his time out of employment than in during this time. Work apart, he still persevered with his writing.³

On 24 April 1929, Zhang's short story 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' appeared in the magazine Benliu that was edited by Lu Xun and Yu Dafu. This marked the beginning of Zhang's pupil-teacher relationship with Lu Xun which lasted until Lu Xun's death in October 1936.

From 1928 onwards he came to know a lot of business people, factory workers, primary school teachers, ricksha pullers, apprentices, soldiers, the unemployed, etc.⁴ Wide contact with all sorts of people meant that Zhang became very skilled at many dialects; he was able to speak the dialects of Xiangxiang, Hangzhou, Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing all very well.⁵

- 1 Zhou, 96; according to Shen, 274, Zhang did not leave Beijing until the summer of 1927, but Zhou, 96, suggests that Zhang was already in Nanjing in June 1927 and living at his sister's house.
- 2 Zhou, 96.
- 3 Shen, 274; Zhang, Living China, without specifying any dates says:".... I lived the career of petty office-worker, assistant in the army, reporter and staff writer on a newspaper, school teacher, and what-not."
- 4 Shen, 274.
- 5 Jiang Muliang, 61, 62; Jiang Muliang, 59, says that Zhang also knew playboys, landlords, dockworkers, servants, and maids and used to question them about their lives.

For the first six months of 1930, using the assumed name Zhang Yizhi 张一之, Zhang worked in Nanjing as a clerk at the Nationalist Staff Officer Headquarters 国民党参谋本部. During this time Zhang became acquainted with Han Qi 韩起, Zhong Qianjiu 钟潜九, Lo Xi (better known as Ouyang Shan) 罗西. They often discussed together questions such as China's revolutionary future. They used to go to Shanghai to take part in revolutionary cultural activities organised by the League of Left-wing Writers. About this time Zhang also helped to select manuscripts for the magazine Youwei 《幼稚》 run by Ouyang Shan and some others.¹

In September 1931, Zhang became a member of the Shanghai branch of the League of Left-wing Writers 中国左翼作家联盟. He was in a small group with Lou Shiyi 楼适夷 and Ye Yiqun 叶以群. He also took part in the activities of the "Committee to promote literature for the masses" 文艺大众委员会 which was an integral part of the League of Left-wing Writers. He apparently also helped with editorial work on several of the league's publications like Shizi jietou 《十字街头》. During this period Zhang became acquainted with Mao Dun, Ding Ling, Xia Yan 夏衍, Yang Hansheng 阳翰笙, Shen Qiyu 沈起予, Zheng Boqi 郑伯奇, Mu Mutian 穆木天, Qian Xingcun 钱杏邨 (better known as 阿英) and others on the literary Left.

On his return to Nanjing, he became acquainted with Zhang Guangren 张光人 (better known as the critic Hu Feng 胡风).

In December 1931, Zhang took part in the inaugural meeting of the 'Alliance of the Cultural World against Imperialism and for Resistance to the Japanese' 文化界反帝抗日联盟. Amongst those who also attended the meeting were Xia Mianzun 夏丏尊, Zhou Jianren 周建人 (young brother of Lu Xun), Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之, Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶 and Ding Ling.²

1 Shen, 274

2 Shen, 275

March and April 1932, Zhang spent at his sister's house in Nanjing. During this time he helped to set up a branch of the League of Left-wing Writers in Nanjing. Later the same year, using the name Zhang Huanzhi 张焕之, he became a copy-clerk 文取 in the office of the Nanjing Government Military Affairs Committee 南京政府军事委员会.¹ Whilst working in this office Zhang became close friends with a colleague and fellow Hunanese writer Jiang Muliang 蒋牧良. Recalling this period, Jiang described how he and Zhang used to discuss literature and their latest creations in slack moments during the afternoon at the office.² In the winter of 1932, Zhang was discovered to be the writer Zhang Tianyi rather than the unknown copy-clerk Zhang Huanzhi by a Nationalist sympathiser; Zhang left his job and moved to Shanghai and then Hangzhou. It was about this time that Zhang's novel Cogwheel 《齿轮》 (which appeared under the pseudonym Tie Chihan 铁池翰 at the end of September 1932) was banned by the Nationalist censors.

In the summer of 1933, Zhang returned to Hangzhou for a month or two, before going back to Nanjing where once again he lived in his sister's home. At this time he was without a job, so he spent all his time writing.³ It was presumably during this period in Nanjing that Zhang and Jiang Muliang organised a discussion group for would-be writers which usually held its meetings at Zhang's sister's house. At one time or another Wu Zuxiang, Chen Baichen 陈白尘 and Jiang Tianzuo 蒋天佐 all attended meetings of this discussion group.⁴

1 Shen, 276.

2 Jiang Muliang 62, 63; Jiang Muliang does not specify any dates in his reminiscence, but according to Jiang Muliang, 69, they were together for 7 or 8 years in succession, during which time they moved from Nanjing to Shanghai and then on to Hunan. They parted when the Dazhong bao that they both worked on in Changsha folded some time in 1938. This would put their first acquaintance and common employment in Nanjing as 1930 or 1931 rather than some time in 1932 as posited by Shen, 276.

3 Shen, 276.

4 Jiang Muliang, 64; according to Wu, 122 and interview with Wu Zuxiang (29. 4. 1981) in Beijing, Wu and Zhang first met in Nanjing in the autumn of 1934.

In the early summer of 1934 Zhang became acquainted with Wang Renshu 王任叔, Zhu Fan 朱凡 and others. Through Zhu Fan and Zhong Qianjiu, Zhang got to know a warder at an army prison, Shen Bingquan 沈炳铨. With Shen's assistance, Zhang was able to help some of the literati in prison, smuggling a manuscript translation by Lou Shiyi 楼适夷 out of the prison, and then taking it to a publisher in Shanghai.¹

In August 1934, Zhang went to Hangzhou, and after the end of the summer holidays, he taught at Xihu Arts College 西湖艺专 substitute teaching a Chinese language course for a short time. In October, he returned to Nanjing.

In March 1935, the Nationalist government blacklisted Zhang's short novel Diary of Ghostland. In April, Zhang became acquainted with Chen Baichen in Nanjing. At the beginning of August, at the invitation of Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎, he went to teach at Jinan University 暨南大学 in Shanghai. He taught the history of Modern Chinese Literature. During this time he lived at Zhen ru zhen 真茹镇 on the outskirts of Shanghai. In October 1935 he temporarily left his post at Jinan University in order to return to Nanjing. Later the same month he went from Nanjing to Hangzhou for a short time. Whilst in Hangzhou he made the acquaintance of Ge Qin 葛琴 and her husband Shao Quanlin 邵荃麟.²

After Spring Festival in February 1936, Zhang returned to Shanghai from Nanjing, and once again taught in Jinan University, teaching a new course on Creative Writing 小说习作.

On 10 April 1936, Zhang met Lu Xun for the first time in a coffee shop on North Sichuan Road 北四川路 in

1 Shen, 276.

2 Shen, 277.

Shanghai.¹ Later the same month, Zhang's friend Feng Xuefeng came to Shanghai from the north of Shanxi Province 陕北 and they often met subsequently. Zhang agreed to perform various tasks allocated to him by Feng.²

When Lu Xun died on 19 October, Zhang hurried back to Shanghai from a visit to Nanjing in order to take part in Lu Xun's funeral service. Zhang officiated at the service, being one of the eight young writers who carried the coffin.³

Zhang edited the shortlived monthly magazine Xiaoshuojia 《小说家》. The magazine, which was published in Shanghai, put out only two issues between October and December 1936, before closing down.⁴

In March 1937, at the suggestion of Ge Qin, Zhang, Shao Quanlin, Ye Yiqun, Liu Baiyu 刘白羽, Zhu Fan 朱凡, Jiang Muliang, Wang Tizhi 王悌之 and a few other writers, went to Ge Qin's home town at Dingshan near Yixing in Jiangsu 宜兴丁山 and there they rented a house.⁵ During this

1 Zhang had corresponded with Lu Xun for a number of years since March 1929 when Zhang first sent his story 'Dream lasting Three and a Half Days' 三天半的梦 to Lu Xun who was at the time co-editing the magazine Benliu 《奔流》 with Yu Dafu. What survives of the subsequent correspondence deals mainly with Zhang's submissions of stories and an autobiographical sketch for various foreign collections of translations of contemporary works like Edgar Snow's Living China and an edition of world humour 《世界幽默全集》 edited by the Japanese Masuda Wataru 增田涉.

2 Shen, 277; according to Wu, 126, Zhang did some work for the Communist Party, but Wu claims to be uncertain as to the precise extent or nature of this work.

3 Shen, 278.

4 Personal interview with Tang Tao, London, 13 July 1982.

5 According to Anon, Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian, Vol. 2, 718 Wu Zuxiang was also one amongst their number, but according to Wu Zuxiang, interview (29. 4. 1981), he was not amongst those who actually participated. He also recalled that the Guomindang authorities got wind of the fact that "a large group of writers of the League of Left-wing Writers had come to Dingshan" and so the writers were forced to leave after only a fortnight. Shen, 278, suggests that the writers stayed at Dingshan for as long as two months.

time, each writer pursued his own creative or translation work and they criticised and discussed each other's works. Apart from these literary activities, they also discussed how best to participate in the War of Resistance against Japan that was imminent, and also such questions as what new literary creations would be required under the new war conditions.¹

At the beginning of May 1937, Zhang returned to Shanghai from Dingshan. Later that month, at the suggestion of Feng Xuefeng, Zhang asked Mao Dun to give the lead by inviting a group of young writers to meet once a fortnight. Over a meal they would exchange information about the literary scene, and discuss literary matters. Amongst the young writers invited to participate were Sha Ting 沙汀, Ai Wu 艾芜, Jiang Muliang, Chen Baichen, Duanmu Hongliang 端木蕻良. After a few months the meetings ceased.²

In June 1937, Zhang, Dong Chuncai 董纯才 and some others took part in 'A Research Committee on Children's Reading Matter' 儿童读物研究会.

In August 1937, Zhang went on the editorial board of the Jiuwang ribao 《救亡日报》, a newspaper published by the Shanghai Arts Workers Save the Nation Association 上海市文艺界救亡协会. Zhang was one of the founders of this Association.

In the middle of September, Zhang left Shanghai by car accompanied by Jiang Muliang and a few others. They went along the Zhejiang-Jiangxi road, passing through Nanchang on their way to Changsha. Feng Xuefeng issued the order for them to coordinate the anti-Japanese resistance work by writers in the Hunan area and to help with propaganda and refugee relief work.

1 Shen, 278; see note above.

2 Shen, 278, 279.

In the spring of 1938, Zhang went back to the hometown of his forefathers, Xiangxiang 湘乡, for a short stay, before returning to Changsha. On his return to Changsha he took up a teaching post at the Beiping Minguo Academy 北平民国学院. He gave a course on creative writing.¹ At this time Zhang lived on a small island called Niutou zhou 牛头洲 in the middle of the Xiang river 湘江 that runs through Changsha.

About this time Zhang worked on the editorial board of Dazhong bao 《大众报》 with Pan Kaici 潘开茨, Jiang Muliang, Zhang Shengli 张生力 amongst others.

On 9 May 1938, Zhang, Jiang Muliang, Zhu Renhe 朱人鹤 and several other writers met at the Children's Library of the Minzhong Club 民众俱乐部儿童图书馆. According to a national directive of the Zhonghua quanguo wenyijie kangdi xiehui 中华全国文艺界抗敌协会, a branch of the association was to be set up in Changsha. The meeting elected Zhang, Zhu Renhe and You Xiaoyu 优笑雨 to be members of the preparatory committee. Later, Zhang became Director of the Hunan Wenkanghui 湖南文抗会.

On 14 May 1938, Zhang was one of the co-signatories with Mao Dun, Yu Dafu, Lao She, Ding Ling and others of 'An open letter to Zhou Zuoren' 给周作人的一封信 which was published in Kangzhan wenyi 《抗战文艺》 1:4.

In July 1938, Zhang took part in the fourth research conference of the Wartime Literary Association 战时文会 and he delivered a speech entitled 'Reading and Writing' 阅读与写作.

¹ Shen, 279; this period in Zhang's life has been recalled by one of Zhang's students at this time, Ouyang Wenbin 欧阳文彬. See Sources p.350.

In September, Zhang moved from Changsha to Shaoyang 邵阳 where he obtained a long-term teaching contract as a teacher at the Tangtian Wartime Lecturing Academy. Wang Xiyan 王西彦 was also at the time a teacher at this academy and the two writers became good friends.¹

In January 1939, at the instigation of the provincial leadership, Zhang started work on the editorial board of Shaoyang's newspaper Guancha ribao. On 16 January, Zhang took part in the first literary conference organised by the Zijiang Opera Company's National Salvation Office 资江歌剧团救亡室自我教育组第一次文艺座谈会. Zhang delivered a lecture entitled 'How to write popular articles' 怎样写通俗文章. On 18 January, Zhang took part in a meeting of the Hunan wenkanghui 湖南文抗会 at the office of the Guancha ribao. It was decided at the meeting to set up a News Agency in Shaoyang 邵阳通讯处. Zhang was appointed Deputy Head of the Propaganda section. On 23 January, Zhang attended the second conference of the Zijiang Opera Company's National Salvation Office and there were discussions about popular literature. The conference met again the following week and the discussions continued.²

In May 1939, Zhang left Shaoyang and went to Datan near Xupu in Hunan 湖南溆浦大潭 to take up a post at the Beiping Minguo Academy which had moved there from Changsha. Zhang only taught about six hours a week, and the rest of his time he devoted to writing articles. He did not attempt to write fiction during this time, concentrating his efforts on writing works of literary criticism.³

During much of 1939 and up until early 1940, a heated discussion raged in periodicals such as Wenyi zhendi, Jiuwang ribao, Li bao and Qi yue about Zhang's work 'Mr. Hua Wei'

1 Shen, 279; Wang 218-220 recalls this period; and in my interview with Wang (11. 6. 1981) in Shanghai he also talked of the time he spent with Zhang at Shaoyang.

2 Shen, 279.

3 Shen, 280.

华威先生 . The furor started after a translation of 'Mr. Hua Wei' was published in a Japanese magazine 《改造》 in November 1938. Debate centred round such questions as the degree of realistic exposure desirable in literary works describing the War of Resistance to Japan, the relationship between literature and life, the veracity of stereotypes and the effectiveness of objectivity, etc. Those who took part in the debate included Lin Lin 林林, Mao Dun, Wang Xiyan, Wu Zuxiang, Li Yuzhong 李育中, Leng Feng 冷枫, Sha Jiening 沙介宁 and Zhou Xing 周行 .

During 1940, Zhang completed the first part of a projected work entitled 'The Story of Imperialism' 《帝国主义的故事》. This first part was a novel for children called Golden Duck Empire 《金鸭帝国》. ¹

During 1941, Zhang moved to Ningxiang 宁乡 (also in Hunan) when the Minguo Academy at which he taught moved there. ²

In the autumn of 1942, exhausted after many years of literary activity and suffering from tuberculosis, Zhang was instructed by his doctor to rest. He stopped writing for many years after this and his health deteriorated for some time before there was any improvement in his condition. ³

In April 1943, several Chongqing journals carried articles about Zhang's illness and the following month the Xinhua ribao 《新华日报》 in Chongqing in its May 5 edition reported that the fund set up to help Zhang during his illness had received donations amounting to 10,689 dollars. During the course of 1943, Zhang received several hundred letters from well-wishers as well as monetary gifts. ⁴

1 Part of Golden Duck Empire appeared in serialised form in the Hankou 汉口 publication Shaonian xianfeng 1:1-4, 8-9 between February and June 1938, under the title 'Diguozhuyi de gushi' 帝国主义的故事 .

2 Shen, 280.

3 Shen, 281.

4 Shen, 281.

In November 1944; Zhang left Xiangxiang 湘乡 in Hunan because of the strategic withdrawal to the deep South. He went westwards via Xinhua 新化, Yuanling 沅陵, Qiancheng 乾城, Pengshui 彭水 before finally reaching Chongqing after a journey lasting several months. In Chongqing Zhang lived at the headquarters of the local branch of the League of Left-wing Writers 张家花园六号“文协”总会.¹

At the invitation of Chen Baichen, Zhang moved from Chongqing to Chengdu in the early summer of 1945.² Zhang lived first in a hostel for the editorial staff of Huaxi wanbao 《华西晚报》, the newspaper for which Chen Baichen was working at this time. Later he went to live at Tian Yiping's 田一萍 home. Zhang spent a short time in a French hospital undergoing treatment. In September or October 1945, Zhang moved to a village in Pixian 郫县 not far from Chengdu and he lived in this village in the home of Lu Shaoxian 鲁绍先 until 1948. In the winter of 1945, Zhang was visited secretly by Sha Ting and Chen Xianghe 陈翔鹤.³ During this time of convalescence, Zhang did some reading, mainly of classical literature, and made preparations for the writing of several subsequent literary critical articles like 'Notes on The Journey to the West' 《西游记》札记. Zhang also studied some Esperanto whilst recuperating out of boredom, but he did not make much progress.⁴

In August 1948, Zhang's health improved enough for him to travel to Shanghai, where he went to live in Ouyang Wenbin's 欧阳文彬 home. He changed his name to Zhang Yangwu 张养吾. After a break of six years without writing

1 Shen, 281.

2 Shen, 281; according to Sha, ii, Zhang was already convalescing in a village near Pixian 郫县 not far from Chengdu when he was visited by Sha Ting and Chen Xianghe 陈翔鹤 in 1944.

3 Shen, 281.

4 Jiang Muliang, 72; letter from Zhang's daughter, Zhang Zhang 张章 (6. 12. 1980).

anything creative, Zhang finally had some fables published in the Hong Kong magazine Xiaoshuo yuekan 《小说月刊》 on 1 October 1948.

In November 1948, Zhang left Shanghai and went to Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, Zhang lived in a hostel belonging to the League of Left-wing Writers.¹ Zhang and Jiang Muliang were living in a small 4-storey building in Canton Road in Kowloon when in 1949 Long Liangchen 龙良臣 set up his Qiushi Publishing House 求实出版社 in the same building. Zhang apparently wrote the calligraphy for the publishing house's signboard.² Whilst recuperating in Hong Kong, Zhang saw something of Shao Quanlin, Ge Qin, Jiang Muliang and Jiang Tianzuo.³

Whilst in Hong Kong, some more fables that Zhang had written whilst recuperating were published in several Hong Kong magazines.⁴

In the summer of 1949, Zhang and some other writers living at the time in Hong Kong were planning to journey to Beijing, but Zhang's illness once more took a turn for the worse, and coughing blood he was unable to join the party. He stayed behind in Long Liangchen's home recovering from this new attack of tuberculosis.⁵

In July, Zhang was elected in absentia to be a member of the Chinese National Association of Writers 中华全国文学工作者协会 at the first national delegate conference of Chinese Workers in the Arts 中华全国文

1 Shen, 281.

2 Ya, 56.

3 Shen, 281.

4 Shen, 281.

5 Shen, 179.

艺工作者第一次代表大会.¹

Through the good offices of the Communist Party Zhang was sent to Jinghu Hospital on Macao Island 澳门镜湖医院 in September 1949. Zhang was treated by the director of the hospital Ke Lin 柯麟. During his stay of 5 months at the hospital, Zhang encouraged the hospital patients to put out a newsletter; Zhang himself wrote some short items for the newsletter. In May 1950, Zhang's illness took a turn for the better and he left Macao and went via Guangzhou (Canton) to Beijing.²

By January, 1951, Zhang was already involved with the Central Literary Research Institute in Beijing 中央文学研究所.³

1 Shen, 179; according to Zhang, Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan, 279, Zhang was successively Deputy Director of the Central Institute for Literary Instruction and Training 中央文学讲习所副主任, delegate to the National Delegate Conference of the Chinese Literary Alliance 中国文联全国委员会委员, member of the leading Party group of the Chinese Writers' Union 中国作家协会党组成员, permanent secretary to the Chinese Writers' Union 中国作家协会书记处书记, delegate to the Creative Literature Conference of the Chinese Writers' Union 中国作家协会创作委员会委员 and Editor-in-chief of Renmin wenxue 《人民文学》主编.

2 Shen, 179; interview with Shen Chengkuan and Zhang Zhang (1. 4. 1981).

3 Zhang, Wenxue zaping, 11 refers to the fact that in January 1951 Zhang gave an afternoon lecture to new arrivals at the Central Literary Research Institute. Zhang's lecture entitled 关心和注意的方面 is to be found in Wenxue zaping, 1-11. According to Anon., Liushi nian wenyi dashi ji 1919-1979, 131, the Central Literary Research Institute 中央文学研究所 held an inauguration ceremony on 8 January, 1951, attended by Guo Moruo, Mao Dun and Zhou Yang amongst others. The Research Institute was controlled by the Ministry of Culture and managed by the National Literary Alliance 全国文联. The Institute was under the direction of Ding Ling and Zhang Tianyi, and its aim was to assist young writers of promise and writers in factories and in the countryside to improve their literary skills. Courses lasted for approximately two years. Later the Research Institute changed its name to "Institute for Literary Instruction and Training" 文学讲习所.

In 1953, Zhang became acquainted with Shen Chengkuan who was at this time working in Beijing in the literary section of a propaganda department 宣传部门的文艺处. In 1954, they married. They have one daughter Zhang Zhang 张章 who was born in 1954.¹

During the winter of 1952, Sha Ting and Zhang met again in Beijing. According to Sha Ting, Zhang was still a semi-invalid at this time.²

In September 1953, Zhang was a delegate to the second National Conference of Chinese Workers in the Arts 中华全国文学艺术工作者代表大会.³ During the course of the conference, the Chinese National Association of Literary Workers 中华全国文学工作者协会 established in July 1949 was replaced by the Chinese Writers' Union.

In October 1953, Zhang was given executive responsibilities in the newly established Chinese Writers' Union 中国作家协会理事.⁴

During 1953, Zhang worked with Sha Ting as a member of the 11 strong Creative Literature Committee of the Chinese Writers' Union 中国作家协会创作委员会委员.⁵

In the spring of 1953, Wang Xiyan visited Zhang at his home at the Chinese Writers' Union in Beijing 北京东总布胡同作家协会.⁶ In the early autumn of 1953, upon

1 Interview with Shen Chengkuan and Zhang Zhang, Beijing (1. 4. 1981).

2 Sha, ii.

3 Anon., Xiandai Zhongguo renming cidian, 615; Zhang, Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan, 279.

4 Anon., Xiandai Zhongguo renming cidian, 615; Zhang, Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan, 279.

5 The other members were Ding Ling, Lao She, Feng Xuefeng, Cao Yu, Shao Quanlin, Huang Mei 荒煤, Yuan Shuipai 袁水拍, Chen Baichen and Yan Wenjing.

6 Wang, 225.

Wang Xiyan's return from a trip to Korea, he went to live at the Writers' Union for about two months. Wang Xiyan was billeted in accommodation in the same courtyard as Zhang, Sha Ting and Ai Wu 艾芜. The four writers saw a great deal of one another during this time and discussed such matters as the Korean War, Angang 鞍钢, the Writers' Union, Renmin wenxue, life and literary matters in general.¹ According to Wang's recollection, Zhang and Sha Ting were at this time already doing work for the Writers' Union and for Renmin wenxue.²

Zhang joined the editorial board of Renmin wenxue in time for the July/August 1953 edition published on 7. 8. 1953. At the same time Shao Quanlin and Yan Wenjing 严文井 replaced Mao Dun and Ding Ling as Editor-in-chief and Deputy Editor-in-chief respectively. After becoming Editor-in-chief in December 1958 he continued to occupy this post at least until June 1965. With the publication of the July 1965 edition, the names of the Editor-in-chief and editorial board members ceased to be specified. Publication of Renmin wenxue was suspended in June 1966.

In 1953, Zhang was supervising the literary activities of young writers Sun Xiaoping 孙岗平, Deng Youmei 邓友梅 and Liu Chao 刘超 at the Central Literature Instruction and Training Institute 中央文学讲习所.³ Zhang's co-workers in this supervisory role at this time included Ding Ling and the poet Ai Qing 艾青.⁴

In June 1954, Zhang became Deputy-director of the Children's Literature Commendatory Committee 儿童文艺创作表彰委员会副主任.⁵ In December 1953, Zhang's

1 Wang, 226.

2 Wang, 226.

3 Sun mistakenly refers to it as 中国文学讲习所; see also above p.369 note 3.

4 Sun.

5 Anon., Xiandai Zhongguo renming cidian, 615.

children's story 'The Story of Lo Wenying' 罗文应
的故事 was awarded a top national prize 全国儿
童文学艺术评奖大会一等奖.¹

In August 1954, Zhang attended the First People's Congress
as delegate for Lüda 全国人民代表大会旅
大市代表.²

Also in 1954, Zhang took an active part in the campaign to
criticise the so-called Hu Feng counter-revolutionary clique
胡风反革命集团.³

From January 1956 to November 1957, Zhang was a member of
the editorial board of Renmin wenxue; Yan Wenjing 严文井
was editor-in-chief during this time. In December 1957, a
new board was installed with Zhang as editor-in-chief.⁴

An article in Renmin ribao, entitled 'A large group of
Beijing literati have decided to go into factories, the country-
side and armed forces for a long period' 北京大批文
艺工作者决心长期深入工厂农村
和连队 published on 12 November, 1957 reported that many
writers including Zhang were being mobilised to leave Beijing as
part of the 'xia fang' 下放 movement.⁵ It seems that
Zhang did not eventually take part in the 'xia fang' movement.⁶

1 Anon., Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian, Vol. 1, 262.

2 Anon., Xiandai Zhongguo renming cidian, 615.

3 Sha, iv; Zhang's article "Discussing the 'abilities' of
the Hu Feng clique" dated 9. 1955 appeared in his collection
of literary critical articles Wenxue zaping 《文学
杂评》, Beijing (10. 1958).

4 Fokkema, 156; according to Anon., Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian,
Vol. 1, 260, Zhang did not become editor-in-chief of Renmin
wenxue until some time in 1958. Renmin wenxue is an organ
of the Chinese Writers' Union.

5 Fokkema, 156.

6 Interview with Shen Chengkuan and Zhang Zhang (1. 4. 1981).

In 1958, however, soon after a meeting of the Party leadership of the Writers' Union 作协党组扩大会 Zhang went to live at Peking University. His objective was to gather material to write a novel about the problems faced by intellectuals trying to remould their ideology. Zhang battled away at this project for as long as his health would hold up.¹ After a few months Zhang left Peking University and abandoned his project because of poor health.²

In March 1959, Zhang represented the province of Sichuan at the second National People's Congress. As part of Zhang's responsibilities as a representative to the People's Congress, he travelled extensively to such places as Sichuan, Wuhan, Hunan (visiting Xiangxiang), Dalian 大连 and Angang 鞍钢 in the North-east and Sanmenxia 三门峡 in Henan.³

In 1960, Zhang was a delegate to the third national conference of Chinese Workers in the Arts. In the same year, he became one of the secretaries in the secretariat of the Chinese Writers' Union 中国作家协会书记处书记, a post he held until the Cultural Revolution.

In September 1964 Zhang was a delegate to the third National People's Congress; once again he represented the province of Sichuan at the congress.⁴

After the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Zhang was divested of his power to work and write.⁵ In 1967, Zhang was criticised in the periodical Wenxue zhan bao 《文学战报》.⁶

1 Sha, iv; interview with Shen Chengkuan and Zhang Zhang (1. 4. 1981)

2 Interview with Shen Chengkuan and Zhang Zhang (1. 4. 1981)

3 Interview with Shen Chengkuan and Zhang Zhang (1. 4. 1981); the precise dates when Zhang made these journeys are not clear, but it seems fairly certain that Zhang visited Wuhan at some point in 1959.

4 Anon., Xiandai Zhongguo renming cidian, 615.

5 Zhang, Zhongguo xiandai zuojiazhuan lue, 150.

6 Anon., Xiandai Zhongguo renming cidian, 615.

Towards the end of 1969, Zhang together with several thousand other cadres went to a Ministry of Culture cadre school in Hubei 湖北文化部干部学校. Whilst at cadre school, Zhang was engaged in light manual work. In April or May 1972, Zhang returned to Beijing from cadre school because of poor health. ¹

Early in 1975, Zhang suffered a stroke that left him paralysed down his right-hand side. ² Zhang's ability to speak and write was seriously impaired.

Zhang's literary activities after his stroke were confined to light tasks and responsibilities of honorary significance. He continued in name to be a member of the editorial board of Renmin wenxue. In 1980 and 1981, he was one of the veteran writers on the panel of judges that selected the best short stories to have appeared in magazines during the course of the preceding year. ³

During the last years of his life, until his death on 28 April, 1985, Zhang lived with his wife and daughter in a roomy ground floor flat in a large modern block of flats in central Beijing. ⁴

1 Interview with Shen Chengkuan and Zhang Zhang (1. 4. 1981).

2 Zhang, Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan, 280.

3 Sun, op. cit.

4 Guangming ribao, 30. 4. 1985.

APPENDIX B

Bibliography of the Works of Zhang Tianyi

Bibliography of the Works of Zhang Tianyi

1. Introduction

i) Sources

Bibliographical lists of Zhang's works are to be found in the following: Tsau Shu-ying's Ph.D. Thesis "Zhang Tianyi's Fiction: The Beginning of Proletarian Literature in China." (Diss. University of Toronto 1976); Itō Keiichi's article 'Further discussions about Zhang Tianyi' 张天翼再论 (Jinbun gaku ho 36 (1963) 139-151 [Tokyo, Toritsu Daigaku Jinbun Gakabu]); Shen Chengkuan et al. 'A Chronology of Zhang Tianyi's literary activities' 张天翼文学活动年表 (Xin wenxue shiliao 2 (1981) 272-281, 179); Shen Chengkuan 'An index of Zhang Tianyi's works' 张天翼著作简目 (Hua cheng 2 (1981) 105-107); Shen Chengkuan 'Chronology of Zhang Tianyi's works 1922-1980' 张天翼著作系年 (1922-1980) in Research materials on Zhang Tianyi 张天翼研究资料 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe. 1982) 502-521. The last mentioned work by Zhang's wife Shen Chengkuan is the most comprehensive bibliography of Zhang's works to have appeared to date. The lists to be found in Tsau Shu-ying and Itō Keiichi contain errors and omissions.

My own bibliographical list which follows this introduction is largely based on Shen Chengkuan's chronology but attempts at the same time to improve upon it. I have managed to find more than three-quarters of Zhang's known fictional output in magazines and newspapers of the day and I hope that the chronological list of Zhang's fictional and non-fictional works which I have made will elucidate Zhang Tianyi's development as a writer of fiction and will make subsequent research on Zhang and his works a more straightforward task.

Other sources of bibliographical information on Zhang of which I have made use for purposes of comparison, consolidation and supplementation, include reference works such as Boorman's 'Biographical Dictionary of Republican China' (Volume 4 p.121), magazine articles such as Zhu Jinshun and Gong Zhaolan's 'Zhang Tianyi's works of children's fiction' 张天翼的

儿童文学创作 (Ertong wenxue yanjiu 3 (3. 1980) 148) and editions of Zhang's works which have references at the foot of texts stating when the story was written or when it was alleged to have first been published.

A useful collection of many of Zhang's literary critical works, A Collection of Zhang Tianyi's Literary Criticism 张天翼文学评论集 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe. 1984), has recently been published. This work reprints several articles from regional newspapers that are not readily accessible.

ii) Method

As far as possible I have arranged Zhang's works chronologically according to the date when the work was first published in a magazine. Failing this, I have fallen back on the first appearance in book-form of articles and stories where this can be reliably ascertained. Fortunately, instances where both the aforementioned methods of dating prove impossible are quite rare.

I have occasionally discovered a date cited at the foot of the text of a story which apparently refers to the date when the writing of the work was completed. Where there are examples of this, I have supplied the supplementary information in round parentheses to the left of the entry.

Where works have been found in magazines, I have additionally supplied the name of a library where the magazine can be found. The appropriate catalogue number, when known, follows in parentheses after the name of the library. To reduce the size of entries, I have resorted to the use of initials to designate each library and the key to the initials is arranged alphabetically below:

- | | |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CLSK | Ceskoslovenská Akademie Ved. Orientální ústav
Lu Šínova Knihovna, Prague, Czechoslovakia. |
| NLSI | Library of the Sinologisch Institut,
Leiden, The Netherlands. |
| NUL | Nanjing University Library, Nanjing University,
Nanjing, People's Republic of China. |
| PL | Beijing Municipal Library (next to Beihai Park)
Beijing, People's Republic of China. |

- PUL Peking University Library, Peking University, Beijing, People's Republic of China. [The Library's collection of pre-1949 periodicals are held in Room 414 of the library and catalogue numbers are those to be found in the periodicals catalogue which is also housed in the aforementioned room.]
- SFUL Fudan University Library, Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China.
- SL Shanghai Municipal Library, Shanghai, People's Republic of China.
- SOAS Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London.

iii) Special observations

Fiction entries appear on the left-hand side of the page and non-fiction entries have been indented so that they appear nearer the right-hand side of the page. Fiction entries have been further subdivided; where the fictional work is a novel, a play, or an example of children's fiction, this information is supplied in square brackets after the title. The fictional entries that are not designated in this way can be assumed to be short stories, except that no distinction is made between stories that are according to Chinese terminology 'zhongpian xiaoshuo' 中篇小说 ('mid-length works of fiction') and 'duanpian xiaoshuo' 短篇小说 ('short stories').

The collections of stories and fiction in which individual works of fiction appear are listed at the end of each entry. To facilitate the cataloguing process I have provided a numbered list of fiction collections on pages 416-417, and these numbers have been used to identify the appropriate collections in which each entry occurs.

2. Chronological list of the works of Zhang Tianyi

- 1922 'Xin shi' 新诗 ('New Poetry')
Libai liu 156 (8. 4. 1922), 37-38
 PL (R050 109)
- 'Guai pi' 怪癖 ('Strange Fetishes')
Libai liu 158 (22. 4. 1922), 13-17
 PL (R050 109)
- 'Zhan yan lu' 展颜录 ('Merry Quips')
Libai liu 162 (20. 5. 1922), 20-21
 PL (R050 109)
- 'Liu xing' 流星 ('Falling Star')
Libai liu 169 (8. 7. 1922), 24-35
 PL (R050 109)
- 'Shaonian shuji' 少年书记 ('Youthful Secretary')
Banyue 1:22 (24. 7. 1922) 8 pages
 PUL (11030)
- 'Renyé guiye' 人耶鬼耶 ('Is it a Man or is it
 a Ghost?')
Xingqi 23 (6. 8. 1922) 16 pages
 PUL (31880)
- 'Xingqi tanhuahui' 星期谈话会
 ('The Week's Discussion')
Xingqi 28 (10. 9. 1922) 2 pages
 PUL (31880)
- 'Xingqi tanhuahui' 星期谈话会
 ('The Week's Discussion')
Xingqi 31 (1. 10. 1922) 6 pages
 PUL (31880)

'Kong shi' 空室 ('Empty Room')

Xingqi 32 (8. 10. 1922) 14 pages

PUL (31880)

'Xiaoshuo zatan' 小说杂谈

('Random Thoughts on Fiction')

Xingqi 33 (15. 10. 1922) 3 pages

PUL (31880)

'Yi zhu' 遗嘱 ('Last Will and Testament')

Xingqi 34 (22. 10. 1922) 12 pages

PUL (31880); SFUL

'Ku zhong' 苦衷 ('Cut to the Quick')

[This has recently been described as a 'factual story'
xieshi xiaoshuo 写实小说. See Du Yuanming: Zai
tansuo zhong qianjin 在探索中前进]

Xingqi 38 (19. 11. 1922) 4 pages

PUL (31880)

'Xiaoshuo zatan' 小说杂谈

(Random Thoughts on Fiction')

Xingqi 39 (26. 11. 1922) 1 page

PUL (31880)

'Yu hu' 玉壶 ('Jade Jug')

Xingqi 39 (26. 11. 1922) 12 pages

PUL (31880)

1923 'E meng' 恶梦 ('Bad Dream')

Banyue 2:17 (16. 5. 1923) 3 pages

PUL (11030)

'Tiemao yin' 铁锚印 ('Steel Anchor Seal')

Banyue 2:19 (14. 6. 1923) 16 pages

PUL (11030)

'Yue xia' 月下 ('Under the Moon')

Banyue 2:22 (28. 7. 1923) 4 pages

PUL (11030)

'Fu' 斧 ('The Axe')

Zhentan shijie 13 (1. 11. 1923) 11 pages

PUL (44140)

'X'

Banyue 3:6 (8. 12. 1923) 18 pages

PUL (11030)

1926 'Hei de chandong' 黑的颤动 ('Vibration of the
Chenbao fukan 1497 (23. 12. 1926) 54-55 Darkness')
SOAS (M3143 Reel 8)

1927 'Zou xiang xin de lu' 走向新的路
('Towards a New Road')
Chenbao fukan 2062 (15. 9. 1927) 26; 2063 (16. 9. 1927) 28;
2064 (17. 9. 1927) 30.
SOAS (M 3143 Reel 9)

1928 'Hei de weixiao' 黑的微笑 ('The Black Smile')
Congxian 3:8 (15. 8. 1928) 1-6.
PUL (35170)

1929 'San tian ban de meng' 三天半的梦
(11.'28) ('Dream lasting Three and a Half Days')
Benliu 1:10 (20. 4. 1929) 1789-1807
PL
Collections 1, 13, 29

- 1930 'Baofu' 报复 ('Retaliation')
Mengya yuekan 1:1 (1. 1. 1930) 119-143
 SOAS (C. Per. 405204 Volume 1)
 Collections 1, 13, 17, 19, 21, 25
- (8.'29) 'Cong kongxu dao chongshi' 从空虚到充实
 ('From Emptiness to Fullness')
 [Also known as 'Jingye xiansheng' 荆野先生
 ('Mr. Jingye')]]
Mengya yuekan 1:2 (1. 2. 1930) 77-128
 PUL (47105)
 Collections 1, 13, 17, 19, 29
- (4.'30) 'Banjia hou' 搬家后 ('After Moving House')
Mengya yuekan 1:5 (1. 5. 1930) 209-228
 SOAS (C. Per. 405204 Volume 2)
 Collections 1, 13, 17
- 1931 'San taiye yu guisheng' 三太爷与桂生
 (5.'30) ('San taiye and Guisheng')
 In Collection 1 (5. 1. 1931) 18 pages
 PL (857.63 306.2-75)
 Collections 1, 13, 17, 18, 29, 30
- (7.'30) 'San dixiong' 三弟兄 ('Three Brothers')
 In Collection 1 (5. 1. 1931) 27 pages
 PL (857.63 306.2-75)
 Collections 1, 13
- (6.'30) 'Ershiyi ge' 二十一个 ('The Twenty-one')
Wenxue shenghuo 1:1 (1. 3. 1931) 1-20
 PUL (4650)
 Collections 2, 17, 18, 29, 30

'Pi dai' 皮带 ('The Leather Belt')

Qingnian jie 1:5 (10. 7. 1931) 125-147

PUL (25540)

Collections 2, 17, 19, 27, 29, 30

Gui tu riji 鬼土日记 ('A Diary of Ghostland')

[Novel] [According to 'Zhang Tianyi wenxue huodong nianbiao', p.274 'Guitu riji' first appeared in the magazine Youzhi zhoukan 幼稚周刊 in 1930.]

Shanghai, Zhengwu Book Company 正午书局 (7. 1931)

SOAS (C. 359 C. 95 Volume 2)

Collection 17

'Xiao Bide' 小彼得 ('Little Peter')

(1930)

Xiaoshuo yuebao 22:10 (10. 1931) 1265-1271

SOAS (C. Per. 407442 Volume 86)

Collections 2, 17, 30

'Zhaoxun ciji de ren' 找寻刺激的人

('A Man in Search of Stimulation')

Lihuo yuekan 1:1 (1. 11. 1931) 1-15; 1:2 (1. 12. 1931) 1-15

PUL (33365)

Collections 2, 17, 29, 30

'Mianbao xian' 面包线 ('The Bread Queue')

Beidou 1:3 (20. 11. 1931) 39-57

SOAS (C.350 C.83 Volume 3)

Collections 2, 17, 20, 29

'Zhu changzi de beiai' 猪肠子的悲哀

('Pig-gut's Chagrin')

Beidou 1:4 (20. 12. 1931) 91-99

SOAS (C.350 C.83 Volume 3)

Collections 2, 17, 18, 29, 30

'Xisong de lianai gushi' 稀松的恋爱故事

('Lackadaisical Love Story')

In Collection 2 (25.12.1931) 85-108

SOAS (c.359 c.61)

Collections 2, 17, 18, 29

1932

'Chuangzuo bu zhen zhi yuanyin ji qi chulu'

创作不振之原因及其出路

('The reason why creative writing is in the doldrums
and the solution')

Beidou 2:1 (20. 1. 1932) 151-2

SOAS (c.350 c.83 Volume 4)

'Da Lin he Xiao Lin' 大林和小林

('Big Lin and Little Lin') [Children's fiction]

[This story later appeared under alternative titles like

'Hao xiongdi' 好兄弟 'Good Brothers', Liang Lin

de gushi' 两林的故事 'The Story of the two Lins'

and after liberation it was considerably altered before
being published in Beijing by the China Shaonian ertong

Publishing House 中国少年儿童出版社

(1956) once more under the title 'Da Lin he Xiao Lin'.]

Beidou 2:1 (20. 1. 1932) 96-114; 2:3,4 (20. 7. 1932)

534-545

SOAS (c.350 c.83 Volume 4)

Collections 27, 28, 31

'Suminglun yu suanming lun' 宿命论与算命论

(3.'32) ('Predestination and Prognostication')

Xiandai 1:1 (5. 1932) 39-57

SOAS (M 304 Reel 1)

Collection 3

'Zui hou lieche' 最后列车 ('The Last Train')

Wenxue yuebao 1:2 (10. 7. 1932) 21-32

SOAS (c.350 c.83 Volume 1)

Collections 3, 21, 29

'Wenxue dazhonghua wenti zhengwen' 文学大
众化问题征文 ('Soliciting articles
about the problem of popularizing literature')

Beidou 2:3,4 (20. 7. 1932) 457-460

SOAS (c.350 c.83 Volume 4)

'Mifeng' 蜜蜂 ('Bees')

Xiandai 1:3 (7. 1932) 340-363

SOAS (M 304 Reel 1)

Collections 3, 9, 17, 29

Shidai de tiaodong 时代的跳动 ('The Pulse of the
Age') [also know as 'Chilun' 齿轮 'Cogwheel' written
by Zhang under the pseudonym Tie Chihan 铁池翰]

[Novel]

Shanghai, Hufeng Bookshop 湖风书店 (30. 9. 1932)

SL (1563356)

'Heshang daduizhang' 和尚大队长
('Battalion Commander "Monk"')

Wenxue yuebao 1:4 (15. 11. 1932) 37-53

SOAS (C.350 C.83 Volume 2)

Collection 3

'Chouhen' 仇恨 ('Hate')

Xiandai 2:1 (11.1932) 95-111

SOAS (M 304 Reel 1)

Collections 3, 17, 20, 21, 27

1933

Yi nian 一年 ('One year') [Novel]

[According to the postface of the 1933 edition, work on
this novel was begun in the autumn of 1929, the manuscript
was laid aside for some time, and not revised until 1931.

The postface is dated December, 1932.]

Shanghai, Liangyou Book Publishing Company 良友图书

印刷公司 (1. 1. 1933)

SOAS (c.359 c.35)

'Lu' 路 ('The Road')

Dongfang zazhi 30:2 (16. 1. 1933) 4-11

SOAS (C. Per. 19599)

Collections 3, 17, 18, 21, 27

'Meng' 梦 ('The Dream')

Xiandai 2:3 (1.1933) 427-436

SOAS (M 304 Reel 2)

Collections 3, 17, 20

'Jibei yu naizi' 脊背与奶子 ('Back and Breasts')

Shanghai, Liangyou Book Publishing Company 良友

图书印刷公司 (19. 2. 1933)

SOAS (c.359 c.80)

Collections 4, 9, 29, 30

'Cheng Yeheng' 成业恒 ('Cheng Yeheng')

Dongfang zazhi 30:5 (1. 3. 1933) 1-16

SOAS (C. Per. 19599)

Collections 4, 9

'Fengnian' 丰年 ('A Prosperous Year')

Xiandai 2:6 (4.1933) 779-792

SOAS (M 304 Reel 2)

Collections 4, 29

Yangjing bang qi xia 洋泾浜奇侠 ('The strange
Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions') [Novel]

Xiandai 3:1-6; 4:2-5 (1. 5. 1933 - 1. 3. 1934)

SOAS (M 304); SL (D 9198)

(2.'33)

'Mifeng ziti' 《蜜蜂》白题 ('An
introduction to "Bees"')

In Collection 3, Shanghai, Xiandai Book Company

现代书局 (15. 5. 1933) 3 pages

PL (857.63 306.2-5)

'Wode younian shenghuo' 我的幼年生活

('My youthful existence')

Wenxue zazhi 1:2 (15. 5. 1933) 61-66

PUL (4480)

'Yi jian xunchang shi' 一件寻常事 ('A Common Occurrence')

Wenxue 1:1 (1. 7. 1933) 61-77

SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

Collections 4, 29

'Zuoze cong ban yaoli tiao le chulai'

作者从半腰里跳了出来

('The writer popped up in midstream')

Xiandai 3:3 (1. 7. 1933) 435

SOAS (M 304 Reel 2); PUL (38905)

'Guanyu "Wo de younian shenghuo"' 关于

《我的幼年生活》('Concerning "My youthful existence"')

Wenxue zazhi 1:3, 4 (31. 7. 1933) 203, 204

PUL (4480)

'Houqi yinxiangpai huihua zai zhongguo' 后期

印象派绘画在中国 ('Postimpressionist painting in China')

Xiandai 3:4 (1. 8. 1933) 438-9

SOAS (M 304 Reel 2); PUL (38905)

'Miyue shenghuo' 蜜月生活 ('Honeymoon Life')

Shenghuo zhoukan 8:36 (9.9. 1933) 730-734; 8:37

(16. 9. 1933) 749-753

PUL (14140)

Collections 6, 12, 29

'Fangong' 反攻 ('Counter Offensive')

Wenxue 1:3 (1. 9. 1933) 430-447; 1:4 (1. 10. 1933) 609-622

SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

Collection 4

'Xiao zhang' 小帐 ('Tips')

Shenghuo zhoukan 8:38 (23. 9. 1933) 769-773; 8:39

(30. 9. 1933) 788-791; 8:40 (7. 10. 1933) 825-830;

8:41 (14. 10. 1933) 845-848.

PUL (14140)

Collections 6, 29, 30

'Tuanyuan' 团圆 ('Family Reunion')

Xiandai 4:1 (11. 1933) 44-57

SOAS (M 304 Reel 2)

Collections 6, 29, 30

1934 'Baoying' 报应 ('Retribution')

Wenxue 2:2 (1. 2. 1934) 214-230

SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

Collections 6, 29

'Shidai de yingxiong' 时代的英雄

('Hero of the Age') [A One-act Play]

Zhongguo wenxue 1:1 (1. 2. 1934)

SOAS (c. 359 c. 95 Volume 3)

Collection 17

'Pengyou liang' 朋友俩 ('A Couple of Chums')

Liangyou 86 (15. 3. 1934) 8-9

PL (R 053 653 2)

Collection 5

'Lao shao wuqi' 老少无欺

('The Old and the Young are without Deceit')

[A One-act Play]

Chun guang 1:2 (1. 4. 1934) 240-261

PUL (30135)

Collection 17

'Bao shi fuzi' 包氏父子

('The Bao Family, Father and Son')

Wenxue 2:4 (1. 4. 1934) 632-655

SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

Collections 5, 9, 21, 25, 27, 29, 30

'Qi yu' 奇遇 ('Strange Meeting')

Wenxue jikan 1:2 (1. 4. 1934) 369-377

SOAS (C. Per. 64350)

Collections 6, 12, 29, 30

'Wenrou zhizaozhe' 温柔制造者

('A Manufacturer of Tenderness')

Xiandai 5:1 (5. 1934) 7-20

SOAS (M 304 Reel 3)

Collections 5, 9, 12, 29

'Huanying hui' 欢迎会 ('The Welcoming Party')

Zuopin 1:1 (6. 1934)

(Apparently in PL and SFUL but not located)

Collections 5, 9, 29, 30

'Zhixianxi' 直线系 ('Straight lines')

Wenyi fengjing 1:1 (1.6. 1934) 44-60

SOAS (c. 359 i. 34); PUL (4180)

Collection 5

'Baobiao' 保镖 ('The Bodyguard')

Wenxue jikan 1:3 (1. 7. 1934) 48-55

SOAS (C. Per. 64350)

Collection 5

'Xiao' 笑 ('Smile')

Xiandai 4:4 (1. 8. 1934) 537-549

SOAS (M 304 Reel 4)

Collections 5, 12, 29, 30

'Jiaoxun' 教训 ('Instruction')

Guo wen zhoubao 11:40 (8. 10. 1934) 8 pages

PUL (42545)

Collection 8

'Qiaogeli' 巧格力 ('Chocolate')

Wenyi huabao 1:1 (10. 10. 1934) 31-45

SOAS (C. Per. 154526)

Collections 8, 29

'Wo de taitai' 我的太太 ('My wife')

In Collection 5 (24.10. 1934) 91-108

SOAS (c. 359 i. 34)

Collections 5, 12

'Yixing' 移行 ('Moving on')

In Collection 5 (24. 10. 1934) 217-268

SOAS (c. 359 i. 34)

Collections 5, 29, 30

'Tan chisu nianjing' 谈吃素念经
('On vegetarianism and reading sutras')

Manhua shenghuo 2 (10. 1934)

Not seen

'Wanren yue' 万仞约 ('Wanren Association')

(9.'34) Wenxue 3:5 (1. 11. 1934) 975-996; 3:6 (1. 12. 1934)

1153-1166

[Published in Chimu 迟暮, Shanghai, Shenghuo
Bookshop 生活书店, (9. 1934) 169-271]

SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

Collections 8, 27

'Shanju' 善举 ('A Good Deed')

Da gong bao (wenyi fukan) (17. 11. 1934)

[See Zhang Tianyi wenxue huodong nianbiao p. 277]

SOAS (c. 359 w. 45)

Collections 8, 29

'Lao Ming de gushi' 老明的故事 ('Old Ming's Story')

Shuixing 1:2 (11. 1934) 114-128

CLSK

Collection 8

'Ernumen' 儿女们 ('Boys and Girls')

Wenxue jikan 1:4 (16.12. 1934) 1-22

SOAS (C. Per. 64350)

Collections 8, 21, 27

1935

'Shan nuren' 善女人 ('Virtuous Women')

Wenxue 4:1 (1. 1. 1935) 51-74

SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

Collections 17, 20, 29

'Chengbao' 呈报 ('Putting in a Report')

Shuixing 1:4 (1. 1935) 344-360

CLSK

Collections 17, 18, 20, 29, 30

'Guoji renwu wofang lu' 国际人物卧访录

('Record of a bedside visit to an international figure')

Wen fan xiaopin 1:1 (5. 2. 1935) 75-79

PUL (4360)

'Yijiuersi - sansi' 一九二四 — 三四 ('1924-1934')

Xin xiaoshuo 1:1 (15. 2. 1935) 19-24; 1:2 (15.2. 1935) 35-47

SOAS (C. Per. 126711)

Collections 17, 29

'Chuzou yihou' 出走以后 ('After leaving')

Wen fan xiaopin 1:2 (5. 3. 1935) 20-34

PUL (4360)

Collections 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 29, 30

'Pusa ye guanbuliao le' 菩薩也管不了了
('Boddhisatva has given up too')

[This story was also published under the title

'Pusa de weili' 菩薩的威力]

Wenxue jikan 2:1 (16. 3. 1935) 96-104

PUL (4690)

Collections 17, 21, 30

'Qingming shijie' 清明时节 ('Qingming Festival')

Wenxue 5:1 (1. 7. 1935) 55-95

SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

Collections 7, 27, 30

'Qiang'an' 抢案 ('A Robbery')

Chuangzuo 1:2 (15. 7. 1935) 11-25

[The magazine is incorrectly dated 15. 5. 1937]

SOAS (C. Per. 154524)

Collections 7, 12, 29, 30

'Shemo jiaozuo wenxue zuopin de "nei rong" he

"xingshi"? Shi xingshi jue ding neirong de ne?

Haishi neirong jue ding xingshi?'

什么叫做文学作品的“内容”和

“形式”? 是形式决定内容的呢?

还是内容决定形式?

('What are meant by the "content" and "form"

of literary works? Is it form that determines

content? Or content that determines form?')

In 文学百题, Shanghai, Shenghuo

Bookshop 生活书店 (7. 1935) 199-208

SOAS (?)

'Youyi' 友谊 ('Friendship')

Wenxue 5:3 (1. 9. 1935) 481-488

SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

Collections 7, 12, 30

'Duoliang' 度量 ('Magnanimity')

Da gong bao wenyi 40 (10. 11. 1935)

PUL (Z/6)

Collections 10, 18, 24, 26

'Zhongqiu' 中秋 ('Mid-autumn Festival')

Wenxue shidai 1:1 (10. 11. 1935) 23-35

PUL (4620)

Collections 10, 19, 26, 30

'Shetaiye de shibai' 蛇太爷的失败

('Lord Snake's Failure')

Wenxue shidai 1:2 (10. 12. 1935) 20-61

PUL (4620)

Collections 10, 26, 29, 30

'Lutu zhong' 旅途中 ('On the Journey')

Wenxue jikan 2:4 (16. 12. 1935) 1053-1060

PUL (4690)

Collections 10, 19, 26

'Qingke' 请客 ('Inviting Guests')

In Collection 6, Shanghai Shenghuo Bookshop 生活书店

(12. 1935) 187-207

SOAS (c. 359 t. 17)

Collections 6, 29

'Chuangzuo de gushi' 创作的故事

('The story of my writing career')

In 创作的^{经验}, Shanghai, Tianma
Bookshop 天马书店 (1935)

PL (811. 1071 635)

(4.'33)

1936 'Jiangli' 讲理 ('Being Reasonable')
Dagongbao wenyi (1. 1. 1936)

Collection 11

'Wo zenyang xie "Qingming shijie"de '
 我怎样写《清明时节》的
 ('How I wrote "Qingming Festival"')
Wenxue 6:1 (1. 1. 1936) 185-190
 SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

'Zhaoxiang' 照相 ('Having a Photograph taken')
Guo wen zhoubao 13:3 (13. 1. 1936) 6 pages
 PUL (42545)
 Collections 10, 26

'Gui xun pian' 闺训篇
 ('A Piece of Female Instruction')
Funu shenghuo 2:1 (16. 1. 1936) 189-197
 PUL (44675)
 Collections 11, 29

'Jiren shouji' 畸人手记 ('Jottings of an Odd Person')
 In Collection 17 (Volume 1), Shanghai, Liangyou Book
 Publishing Company 良友图书印刷公司 (20. 1. 1936) 1-60
 SOAS (c.359 c.95 Volume 1)
 Collections 17, 20, 27

'Chun feng' 春风 ('Spring Breeze')
Wenxue 6:2 (1. 2. 1936) 218-241
 SOAS (C. Per. 64027)
 Collections 9, 11

'Tianyi de xin' 天翼的信 ('Tianyi's Letters')
Ren jian shi 1:1 (16. 3. 1936) 29-31
 PUL (540)

'Mi wei de ye' 蜜味的夜

('A Honey-flavoured Night')

Wenxue 6:4 (1. 4. 1936) 458-471

SOAS (C. Per. 64027)

Collection 11

'Yi ge tical' 一个题材 ('A Story Line')

Zhongxuesheng 64 (1. 4. 1936) 23-39

PL (R 050 454.87 2)

Collection 11

'Shemo shi youmo?' 什么是幽默?

(What is humour?)

[This article was excluded from the collection
'Wenxue baiti' 文学百题 at the insistence
of K.M.T. censors.]

Ye ying 1:3 (10. 5. 1936) 122-124

PUL (23900)

'Dizhu' 砥柱 ('A Pillar of Society')

Zuojia 1:2 (15. 5. 1936) 366-388

PUL (210 65)

Collections 10, 19, 26, 29, 30

'Zhi Ye Lingfeng han yi tong' 致叶灵

风函一通 ('A Letter to Ye Lingfeng')

In Xiandai Zhongguo zuojia shuxin 《现代中国作家书信》, Shanghai, Shenghuo Bookshop
生活书店, (5. 1936) 158

(6.'33)

'Qiguai de difang' 奇怪的地方

('A Strange Place')

Wen ji yuekan 1:1 (1. 6. 1936) 60-90

SOAS (C. Per. 154525)

Collection 28

'Tansheng' 探 胜 ('In Search of Victory')

Da gong bao wenyi 156 (3. 6. 1936)

PUL (Z/6)

Collection (SOAS c. 359 t. 196)

'Bei huzi' 贝 胡子 ('Bearded Bei')

Wenji yuekan 1:2 (1. 7. 1936) 433-440

SOAS (C. Per. 154525)

Collections 11, 15, 21, 24

'Zhui' 追 ('Pursuit')

Xianshi wenxue 1:1 (1. 7. 1936) 66-77

PUL (38825)

Collections 10, 18

'Yidian yijian' 一 点 意 见

('A few opinions')

Xianshi wenxue 1:1 (1. 7. 1936) 1-2

PUL (38825)

'Lu ban' 侣 伴 ('Mate')

Wen ji yuekan 1:4 (1. 9. 1936) 830-841

SOAS (C. Per. 154525)

Collections 14, 29

'Zhu zhan zhe' 主 战 者 ('Warmonger')

Zhongliu 1:1 (5. 9. 1936) 23-27

PUL (6245)

Collection 18

'Qingfeng ba ye' 青 峰 八 爷 ('Eighth uncle Qingfeng')

Dagong bao wenyi (6. 9. 1936)

Not seen

'Shiti de gushi' 失 题 的 故 事 ('Untitled Story')

Zuojia 1:6 (15. 9. 1936) 1250-1284

SOAS (C. Per. 126832)

Collections 28, 29

'Aidao Lu Xun xiansheng' 哀悼鲁迅先生
 ('Lamenting the death of Mr. Lu Xun')
Zhongliu 1:5 (5. 11. 1936) 267-269
 PUL (6245)

'Lu Xun xiansheng shi zenyang de ren'
 鲁迅先生是怎样的人
 ('What sort of person was Mr. Lu Xun?')
Xin shaonian 2:9 (10. 11. 1936) 18-24
 PL (R 056 656 2)

'Yansu de shenghuo' 严肃的生活 ('Serious living')
 In Collection 11, Shanghai, Shenghuo Bookshop 生活书店
 (11. 1936) 23-32
 SOAS (c. 359 c. 38)
 Collection 11

'Yijian xiao shi' 一件小事 ('A Small Matter')
 In Collection 10, Shanghai, Kaiming Bookshop 开明书店
 (11. 1936) 42-80
 SOAS (c. 359 c. 459)
 Collections 10, 24, 26

(1933) 'Tutu dawang' 秃秃大王 ('Great King Baldy')
 Shanghai, Xinghua Book Company 兴华书局 (1936)
 [According to Zhang in "Tutu dawang xin ban qianyan"
 《秃秃大王》新版前言 (dated 8. 12. 1980)
 this story began to appear in installments in the magazine
Xiandai ertong 现代儿童 (1933), but the magazine
 was banned by the Nationalist Government before the story
 had been completely published.]
 SOAS (c. 706 h. 9)
 Collection 31

(4.'36) 'Tutu dawang xu' 秃秃大王序
 ('Preface to "Great King Baldy"')
 In Tutu dawang 《秃秃大王》Shanghai,
 Xinghua Book Company (1936) i-vi
 SOAS (c. 706 h. 9)

'Xia ye meng' 夏夜梦 ('A Midsummer Night's Dream')

[Not located in any periodicals but attributed to the year 1936 in Zhang Tianyi duanpian xiaoshuo xuanji

(xiace) Collection 29, 张天翼短篇小说选集 (下册), Beijing, Wenhua yishu Publishing House

文化艺术出版社, (2. 1981) 638]

In Collection 14, Shanghai, Shenghuo Bookshop 生活书店 (4. 1939) 1-42

SOAS (c. 359 t. 19)

Collections 14, 21, 24, 29

'Zhi ji' 知己 ('An Intimate Friend')

[Not located in any periodicals but attributed to the year 1936 by Tsau Shu-ying in her thesis on Zhang]

In Zhang Tianyi jiezuo xuan 张天翼杰作选

Collection 18, Shanghai, Xin xiang Bookshop 新象书店 (4. 1947) 94-101

NLSI (5768 (20))

Collection 18

(4.'36)

Yangjingbangqi xia tiji 洋泾浜奇侠题记

('Introduction to "The Strange Knight-errant of the Shanghai Concessions"')

In Yangjingbang qi xia 洋泾浜奇侠

Shanghai, Xin zhong Book Company 新钟书局

(1936) i-v

SL (D 9198)

'Dalaixi quanzhuan' 大来喜全传

('A Complete Biography of Dalaixi')

Shenghuo xingqi kan 1:25 (22. 11. 1936) 359 ff.

PUL (14215)

'Xia' 夏 ('Summer')

Wenxue yuekan 2:2

Not seen

1937 'Huijia' 回家 ('Returning Home') [A Novel]
Xin shaonian 3:1-11 (10. 1. 1937 - 10. 6. 1937)
 PUL (50225)

"'Qiguai de difang" xu' 奇怪的地方序
 ('Preface to "A Strange Place"')

In QDD, Shanghai Wenhua Shenghuo Publishing House
 (2. 1937)

'Lu Baotian' 陆宝田 ('Lu Baotian')
Wen cong 1:1 (20. 3. 1937) 2-48
 SOAS (C. Per. 241662)
 Collections 14, 30

'Shilin miji' 士林秘笈
 'A little-known work of Academe'
Zhongliu 2:4 (5. 5. 1937) 202-207;
 2:5 (20. 5. 1937) 264-270
 PUL (6245)

'Tongxiangmen' 同乡们 ('People from the Same Home Town')
Wen cong 1:3 (15. 5. 1937) 408-436
 SOAS (C. Per. 241662)
 Collections 14, 30

Zai chengshi li 在城市里 ('In the City') [A Novel]
 (1936) [This novel is thought by Tsau Shu-ying to have been
 published in February, 1935, but recent evidence suggests
 that it was not written until 1936. See Zhang Tianyi
xiaoshuo xuan (xia juan) 张天翼小说选
 Collection 30 (下卷), Changsha, Hunan People's
 Publishing House 人民出版社 (1980) 817.
 According to Shen Chengkuan's 'Zhang Tianyi zhuzuo jianmu',
 this novel appeared in serialised form in 1936 in the
 periodical Guo wen zhoubao.] Shanghai, Liangyou Book
 Publishing Company 良友图书印刷公司
 (6. 1937) 389 pages
 SOAS (c. 359 c. 22)
 Collection 30

'Mou jiaoshou zhi qingnian daoshi shu'

某教授致青年導師書

('A letter written by a certain professor to a young tutor')

Zhongliu 2:8 (5. 7. 1937) 429-434

PUL (6245)

'Bu tiqi' 不題起 ('Not to mention it')

Libao (27. 7. 1937)

Not seen

'Zhanyuhe' 战与和 ('War and peace')

Zhongliu 2:10 (5. 8. 1937)

Not seen

'Kangzhan yu minzhong' 抗战与民众

('The War of Resistance and the masses')

Guo wen zhoubao 14: 33, 35

Not seen

1938 'Tan Jiu xiansheng de gongzuo' 谭九先生的工作
(11.'37) ('Mr. Tan Jiu's Work')

[This story has not been located in a periodical as yet, but is attributed to the year 1937 by Tsau Shu-ying.

It was apparently written in November, 1937; see

Suxie san pian 速写三篇 'Three Sketches',

Beijing, People's Literature Publishing House 人民文

学出版社 (8. 1963) 27]

In Collection 16, Chongqing, Wenhua shenghuo Publishing

House 文化生活出版社 (1. 1943)

SOAS (c. 359 s. 122)

Collections 16, 27

'Hua Wei xiansheng' 华威先生 ('Mr. Hua Wei')

(2.'38) Wenyi zhendi 1:1 (16. 4. 1938) 3-5

SOAS (C. Per. 240684)

Collections 16, 18, 21, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30

'Zhanzheng yu fanzhazheng' 战争与反战争
('Offensive and counter-offensive')

Da shidai [Apparently serialised]

Not seen

'Tifang Hanjian' 提防汉奸
('Guard against Chinese traitors')

Guancha ribao (28,29. 6. 1938)

Not seen

'Zai tan tifang Hanjian' 再谈提防汉奸
('More on guarding against Chinese traitors')

Guancha ribao (30. 6. 1938)

Not seen

'Hanjian he haoren' 汉奸和好人
('Chinese traitors and good people')

Guancha ribao (1. 7. 1938)

Not seen

'Tan pusa' 谈菩萨 ('On Boddhisatva')

Guancha ribao (2, 3. 7. 1938)

Not seen

'Xin sheng' 「新生」 ('A New Life')
(9.'38) Wenyi zhendi 2:2 (1. 11. 1938) 431-444
SOAS (C. Per. 240684)
Collections 15, 16, 21, 27

1939

'Jinnian shi quanmian kangzhan nian'

今年 是 全面 抗战 年
(This is the year for thorough-going resistance
to the Japanese')

Guancha ribao (1. 1. 1939)

Not seen

'Tuofei zai Zhongguo' 托匪在中国

('Trotskyite bandits in China')

Guancha ribao (4. 1. 1939)

Not seen

'Xizuo zatan zhi yi' 'Ticai de "pingchang"'

习作杂谈之一《题材的“平常”》

('Random observations on learning to write
No.1 "The 'ordinariness' of subject matter"')

Guancha ribao (8. 1. 1939)

'Xizuo zatan zhi er' 'Fajue'

习作杂谈之二《发掘》

('Random observations No.2' 'Finds')

Guancha ribao (17. 1. 1939)

'Xizuo zatan zhi san' 'Zuozhe de taidu'

习作杂谈之三《作者的态度》

('Random observations No.3' 'The author's
point of view')

Guancha ribao (20. 1. 1939)

'Women de fukan' 我们的副刊

('Our supplement')

Guancha ribao (25. 1. 1939)

'Ba baba zuzhi qilai' 把爸爸组织起来

('Organise your Fathers') [Children's fiction]

Guancha ribao (28. 2. 1939)

Not seen

'Yishu yu douzheng' 艺术与斗争

('The arts and struggle')

Guancha ribao (2, 3. 3. 1939)

'Guanyu Hua Wei xiansheng fu Ri'

关于华威先生赴日

('About Mr. Hua Wei's trip to Japan')

[This article was written in response to an article by Lin Lin 林林 entitled 'Hua Wei xiansheng fu Ri' 华威先生赴日 which appeared in Jiuwang ribao (救亡日报) (22. 2. 1939). For more details of these two articles and the ensuing controversy about Zhang's 'Hua Wei xiansheng', see 'Zhang Tianyi wenxue huodong nianbiao' 张天翼文学活动年表 279-280.]

Jiuwang ribao (15. 3. 1939)

'Lun quedian' 论缺点 ('Discussing defects')

Libao (banyuekan) 1:4 (1. 6. 1939)

1940

'Lun wuguan kangzhan de ticai'

论“无关”抗战的题材

('About material irrelevant to the War of Resistance')

Wenxue yuebao 1:6 (15. 6. 1940) 300-303

PUL (4735)

'Guanyu wenyi de minzu xingshi)

关于文艺的民族形式

('Concerning ethnic forms of literature')

Xiandai wenyi 2:1 (25. 10. 1940) 3-10;

2:2 (25. 11 1940) 68-74

SFUL (15334)

1941

'Lun A Q zhengzhuan' 论《阿Q正传》
 ('About "The Story of A Q"')
Wenyi zhendi 6:1 (10. 1. 1941) 66-82
 NUL

'Tan renwu miaoxie' 谈人物描写
 ('Discussing the Description of Characters')
Kangzhan wenyi 7:4, 5 (10.11. 1941) to
 7:6 (15. 6. 1942) 409-417, 406
 SL (216986)
 Editions (See below Section 5)
 [SOAS has 7:6 (C. Per. 129420)]

1942

'Tan Hamulaite' 谈《哈姆莱特》
 ('Discussing Hamlet')
Wenyi zazhi 1:1 (15. 1. 1942)

'Jin ya diguo' 金鸭帝国 ('Golden Duck Empire')
 [Children's Fiction]
Wenyi zazhi 1:1 (15. 1. 1942) - 2:6 (1. 11. 1943)
 SOAS (c. 359 c. 277)
 Edition (See below Section 4)

'Yi fengxin' 一封信 ('A letter')
Wenxue piping 1:1 (1. 9. 1942)
 [Later known as 'Da bianzhe wen' 答编者问
 ('In answer to the editor's questions'), and
 published in Wenyi zhishi liancong (15. 4. 1947)
 12-24]
 PL (R810.5 677.376 2)

'Jia Baoyude chujia' 贾宝玉的出家
 ('Jia Baoyu's becoming a monk')
Wenxue chuanguo 1:3 (15. 11. 1942) 1-19
 PUL (4635)
 Collections (See below Section 5)

'Du Rulin waishi' 读《儒林外史》
 ('On reading "The Scholars"')
Wenyi zazhi 2:1 (15. 12. 1942)

1948 'Laohu wenti' 老虎问题 ('The Tiger problem')
Xiaoshuo yuekan 1:4 (1. 10. 1948)

[In Zhang Tianyi xiaoshuo xuan (xia ce) 张天翼
 小说选(下册) Hunan People's Publishing House
 湖南人民出版社 (4. 1981) 899-903]]
 Collection 30

'Yuyan liu ze' 寓言六则 ('Six Fables')
Wenyi shenghuo 7 (15. 10. 1948) 268-273

[In Zhang Tianyi xiaoshuo xuan (xia ce) 张天翼
 小说选(下册) 912-923]]
 Collection 30

'Xian dao' 仙岛 ('Fairy Island')
Xiaoshuo yuekan 1:5 (1. 11. 1948)

[In Zhang Tianyi xiaoshuo xuan (xia ce) 张天翼
 小说选(下册) 889-898]]
 Collection 30

1949 'Hun shi mo wang' 混世魔王
 ('Devil King who Created Havoc in the World')

Xiaoshuo yuekan 2:1 (1. 1. 1949)
 Not seen

'Yuyan shi ze' 寓言十则 ('Ten fables')

[This collection in fact consists of 12 fables]]
Xiaoshuo yuekan 2:2 (1. 2. 1949)

[In Zhang Tianyi xiaoshuo xuan (xia ce) 张天翼
 小说选(下册) 912-923]]
 Collection 30

'Laohu wenti xupian' 老虎问题续篇

('Continuation of The Tiger Problem')

Xiaoshuo yuekan 2:3 (1. 3. 1949)

In Zhang Tianyi xiaoshuo xuan (xia ce) 张天翼

小说选(下册)904-911]

Collection. 30

1951
(7.'50)

'Zhang Tianyi xuanji zixu'

《张天翼选集》自序

('Preface to "Zhang Tianyi's Selected Works"')

In Collection 21, Beijing, Kaiming Bookshop

开明书店 (7. 1951)

SOAS (c. 351 c. 16)

1952

'Qu kan dianying' 去看电影 ('Going to See a Film')

Renmin wenxue 2 (2. 1952) 54-56 [Children's Fiction]

SOAS (C. Per. 83278)

Collections 22, 23, 28

'Lo Wenying de gushi' 罗文应的故事

('Lo Wenying's Story') [Children's Fiction]

Renmin wenxue 2 (2. 1952) 56-60

SOAS (C. Per. 83278)

Collections 22, 23, 28

'Tamen he women' 他们和我们

('Them and Us') [Children's Fiction]

Renmin wenxue 6 (6. 1952) 37-39

SOAS (C. Per. 83278)

Collections 22, 23, 28

1953 'Rongshengzai jia li' 蓉生在家里
 ('Rongsheng at Home') [Children's Fiction]
Renmin wenxue 3 (3. 1953) 52-57
 SOAS (C. Per. 83278)
 Collection 23

'Sanyue liuri wen e hao' 三月六日偷噩耗
 ('News of a tragic loss on 6 March')
Wenyi bao 5 (15. 3. 1933) 19-20
 SOAS (C. Per. 83044)

'Da hui lang' 大灰狼
 ('Big Grey Wolf') [Children's Fiction]
Renmin wenxue 7-8 (7. 8. 1953) 84-101
 SOAS (C. Per. 83278)
 Collection 23

1956 'Budong naojin de gushi' 不动脑筋的故事
 (1953) ('A Story about not using one's Grey Matter')
 [Children's Fiction] Beijing, Zhongguo shaonian ertong
 Publishing House (1956)
 SOAS (c. 359 k. 34)
 Collections 23, 28

1957 'Bao hulu de mimi' 宝葫芦的秘密
 ('The Secret of the Treasured Gourd') [Children's Fiction]
Renmin wenxue 1 (1. 1957) 35-53; 2 (2. 1957)
 3 (3. 1957) 104-114; 4 (4. 1957) 52-63
 SOAS (with the exception of 2. 1957, C. Per. 82378)
 Collections 23, 28, 31

'Wenyi zenyang biao xian renmin neibu de maodun'
 文艺怎样表现人民内部的矛盾
 ('How literature reveals the internal contradictions
 of the people')
Renmin ribao (19. 3. 1957) 7 SOAS
 [This article was translated into English and
 published under the title 'Writing about
 contradictions' appearing in the magazine Chinese
 Literature 3 (3. 1957) 210-213.]

- 'Xuexi de xuesheng shidai' 学习的学生时代
('The student era of studying')
Singapore Zuojia de xuesheng shidai
Not seen
- 1958
(10.'50)
- 'Youguan xuexi Lu Xun de yi liang ge wenti'
有关学习鲁迅的一两个问题
('One or two problems connected with
studying Lu Xun')
In Wenxue zaping 文学杂评
Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House
作家出版社 (10. 1958) 12-15
PL (828 306-58 12)
- (1.'51)
- 'Guanxin he zhuyi de fangmian'
关心和注意的方面
('Topics to take care about and pay attention to')
In WXZP, Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House
(10. 1958) 1-11
PL (828 306-58 12)
- (5.'51)
- 'Wu Xun de shiye he jingshen'
武训的'事业'和'精神'
('Wu Xun's "profession" and "spirit"')
In WXZP, Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House
(10. 1958) 16-25
PL (828 306-58 12)
- (7.'54)
- 'Qikefu de zuopin zai Zhongguo'
契诃夫的作品在中国
('Chekhov's works in China')
[This article was written for the Russian
newspaper 'Pravda']
In WXZP, Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House
作家出版社 (10. 1958) 44-51
PL (828 306-58 12)

- (5.'55) 'Zhei shi ge geming tong fangeming de douzheng'
 这是个革命同反革命的斗争
 ('This is a struggle between revolution and
 counter-revolution')
 In WXZP, Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House
 作家出版社 (10. 1958) 52-53
 PL (828 306-58 12)
- (9.'55) 'Lun Hu Feng fenzi de caineng'
 论胡风分子的'才能'
 ('Discussing the 'abilities' of the Hu Feng clique')
 In WXZP, Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House
 作家出版社 (10. 1958) 54-64
 PL (828 306-58 12)
- (12.'56) 'Zai xuanya shang de aiqing'
 “在悬崖上”的爱情
 ('Love in "On the Precipice"')
 In WXZP, Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House,
 作家出版社 (10. 1958) 65-76
 PL (828 306-58 12)
- (10.'57) 'Guanyu Shafei nushi' 关于莎菲女士
 ('About Miss Sophie')
 In WXZP, Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House
 (10. 1958) 153-167
 PL (828 306-58 12)
- 'Xiyouji zhaji' 《西游记》札记
 ('Notes on "The Journey to the West"')
 In WXZP, Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House
 (10. 1958) 26-43
 PL (828 306-58 12)

'Du "Meili"' 读《美丽》

('On reading "Beauty"')

In WXZP, Beijing, Zuojia Publishing House.

(10. 1958) 116-125

PL (828 306-58 12)

1959
(9. '58)

'Gei haizimen di yi ban xu'

《给孩子们》第一版序

('Preface to the first edition of "For the Children"')

In Collection 23, Beijing, Renmin Wenxue

Publishing House 人民文学出版社 (1959)

SOAS (c. 359 r. 34)

'Daiyou - tan tical he xie zuopin'

代邮——谈题材和写作品

('Correspondence - about themes and writing literary works')

Renmin wenxue 11 (8. 11. 1959) 67-70

SOAS (C. Per. 82378)

1978
(7. '78)

'Wei Bao hulu de mimi zai ban gei xiao duzhe de xin'

为《宝葫芦的秘密》再版给小读者的信

('A letter addressed to young readers on the occasion of a new edition of "The Secret of the Treasured Gourd"')

In Bao hulu de mimi, Beijing, Zhongguo shaonian

ertong Publishing House 中国少年儿童

出版社 (11. 1978) i-iii

SOAS (C. 706 p. 16)

1979

'Cong renwu chufa ji qita'

从人物出发及其他

('Starting off with characters and other things')

Renmin wenxue 7 (20. 7. 1979) 110-111

SOAS (C. Per. 82378)

'Yidian xiwang' 一点希望 ('Some hope')

In Ertong wenxue chuangzuo mantan

《儿童文学创作漫谈》

Beijing, Zhongguo shaonian ertong Publishing

House 中国少年儿童出版社

(7. 1979) 3-4

SOAS (c. 352 e. 1)

'Bu neng gufu haizimen de qiwan'

不能辜负孩子们的期望

('One cannot disappoint the expectations of children')

Ertong wenxue yanjiu 2 (8. 1979) 19-22

SOAS (C. Per 405875)

'Guanjian yao shuxi liaojie renwu'

关键要熟悉了解人物

('What is crucial is that one should have a thorough understanding of one's characters')

Xiangjiang wenyi (10. 1979)

(11.'61)

'Guanyu renwu xingge yu dianxing wenti'

关于人物性格与典型问题

('About the problems of personalities and stereotypes amongst characters')

Wenyi yanjiu 4 (1. 12. 1979) 40-43

SOAS (C. Per. 406475)

1980

'Yu qingnian zuozhe tan chuangzuo wenti'

与青年作者谈创作问题

('Discussing problems of literary creativity with young writers')

Furong 1:1 (1. 1. 1980)

SOAS (C. Per. 409300)

1980

'Zui ke gan xiao duzhe de choubaol'

最可感小读者的酬报

('What can most win the appreciation of young readers')

Renmin ribao (1. 6. 1980) 3

SOAS (Ref. C. 001)

(2.'80)

'Yiqie weile shi haizimen aiyi he aikan - daixu'

一切为了使孩子们爱益和爱

看——代序 ('Everything is intended

to make children love good things and love reading - a preface')

In Zhang Tianyi zuopin xuan 张天翼作品选

Beijing, Zhongguo shaonian ertong Publishing House

中国少年儿童出版社 (6. 1980) 1-8

'Wei haizimen xiezuoshi xingfu de'

为孩子们写作是幸福的

(Writing for children is pleasurable')

In Wo he ertong wenxue 《我和儿童文学》

Shanghai, Shaonian ertong Publishing House

少年儿童出版社 (8. 1980)

(10.'77)

'Wei ben shu zai ban gei xiao duzhe de xin'

为本书再版给小读者的信

('A letter to young readers on the occasion of a new edition of this book')

In Gei haizimen 《给孩子们》，Beijing,

Renmin wenxue Publishing House 人民文学

出版社 (1980)

SOAS (c. 359 r. 121)

1981

'"Ershiyi ge" ji qita tiji'

《二十一个》及其他”题记

('Notes on "Twenty-one and other stories"')

Baihua zhou 1 (1. 1981) 137

SOAS (C.Per. 407889)

- (1951) 'Guanyu A Q de dianxing yiyi'
关于阿Q的典型意义
('About the stereotypic significance of A Q')
[Based on notes for a lecture delivered in 1951]
Lu Xun yanjiu 2 (2. 1981) 1-14
SOAS (C. Per. 441672)
- (7.'80) 'Qian yan' 前言 ('Foreword')
In Zhang Tianyi duanpian xiaoshuo xuan ji
张天翼短篇小说选集 (Volume 1),
Beijing, Wenhua yishu Publishing House 文化
艺术出版社 (2. 1981) i-ii
- 'He budui zuozhe de tanhua'
和部队作者的谈话
('Conversations with army writers')
In Xiaoshuo chuanguo jingyan tan 《小说创作
经验谈》, Jiangsu, Renmin Publishing
House 人民出版社, (2. 1981) 60, 136, 144
SOAS (c. 352 h. 186)
- n.d. 'Zhanshi de Shanghai jietou' 战时的上海
街头 ('The Shanghai streets during the
war of resistance to Japan')
In Zhanshi de houfang 《战时的后方》
Zhanshi Publishing House 战时出版社
n.d., 1-8
[This was apparently first published in
the newspaper 'Zao bao' 早报]

List of magazines, newspapers and periodicals that appear in the above chronology (arranged alphabetically according to romanisation)

Baihua zhou	《百花洲》
Banyue	《半月》
Beidou	《北斗》
Benliu	《奔流》
Chenbao fukan	《晨报副刊》
Chuangzuo	《创作》
Chun guang	《春光》
Da gong bao (wenyi fukan)	《大公报文艺》
Da shidai	《大时代》
Dongfang zazhi	《东方杂志》
Ertong wenxue yanjiu	《儿童文学研究》
Funu shenghuo	《妇女生活》
Furong	《芙蓉》
Gongxian	《贡献》
Guancha ribao	《观察日报》
Guo wen zhoubao	《国闻周报》
Jiuwang ribao	《救亡日报》
Kangzhan wenyi	《抗战文艺》
Liangyou	《良友》
Libai liu	《礼拜六》
Libao	《立报》
Liuho yuekan	《流火月刊》
Lu Xun yanjiu	《鲁迅研究》
Manhua shenghuo	《漫画生活》
Mengya yuekan	《萌芽月刊》
Renjian shi	《人间世》
Renmin ribao	《人民日报》
Renmin wenxue	《人民文学》
Shenghuo zhoukan	《生活周刊》
Shuixing	《水星》
Wen cong	《文丛》
Wen fan xiaopin	《文饭小品》
Wen ji yuekan	《文季月刊》
Wenxue	《文学》

Wenxue chuangzuo	《文学创作》
Wenxue jikan	《文学季刊》
Wenxue piping	《文学批评》
Wenxue shenghuo	《文学生活》
Wenxue shidai	《文学时代》
Wenxue yuebao	《文学月报》
Wenxue yuekan	《文学月刊》
Wenxue zazhi	《文学杂志》
Wenyi bao	《文艺报》
Wenyi fengjing	《文艺风景》
Wenyi huabao	《文艺画报》
Wenyi shenghuo	《文艺生活》
Wenyi yanjiu	《文艺研究》
Wenyi zazhi	《文艺杂志》
Wenyi zhendi	《文艺阵地》
Wenyi zhishi liancong	《文艺知识连丛》
Xiandai	《现代》
Xiandai ertong	《现代儿童》
Xiandai wenyi	《现代文艺》
Xiangjiang wenyi	《湘江文艺》
Xianshi wenxue	《现实主义》
Xiaoshuo yuebao	《小说月报》
Xiaoshuo yuekan	《小说月刊》
Xin shaonian	《新少年》
Xingqi	《星期》
Xin xiaoshuo	《新小说》
Ye ying	《夜莺》
Youzhi zhoukan	《幼稚周刊》
Zao bao	《早报》
Zhentan shijie	《侦探世界》
Zhongguo wenxue	《中国文学》
Zhongliu	《中流》
Zhongxuesheng	《中学生》
Zuojia	《作家》
Zuopin	《作品》

3. Chronological list of collections of Zhang's fiction:

1. 1931 《从空虚到充实》上海联合书店 (5.1.1931)
《小彼得》上海春光书店 (20.12.1931)
2. 《小彼得》上海湖风书店 (25.12.1931)
3. 1933 《蜜蜂》上海现代书局 (15.5.1933)
4. 1934 《反攻》上海生活书店 (5.1934)
5. 《移行》上海良友图书印刷公司 (24.10.1934)
6. 1935 《团圆》上海文化生活出版社 (12.1935)
1936 《畸人集》上海良友图书印刷公司 (20.1.1936)
7. 《清明时节》上海生活书店 (2.1936)
8. 《万仞约》上海商务印书馆 (3.1936)
9. 《张天翼选集》上海万象书屋 (4.1936)
10. 《追》上海开明书店 (11.1936)
11. 《春风》上海文化生活出版社 (11.1936)
12. 《张天翼创作选》上海仿古书店 (11.1936)
13. 1937 《三兄弟》上海文光书局
[Another title for 《从空虚到充实》collection]
14. 1939 《同乡们》上海文化生活出版社 (4.1939)
15. 1940 《新生》昆明新苑书店 (9.1940)
16. 1943 《速写三篇》重庆文化生活出版社
(1.1943)
17. 1945 《畸人集》上海良友图书印刷公司
(7.1945)
18. 1947 《张天翼杰作选》上海新象书店
(4.1947)

19. 1948 《张天翼文集》上海春明书店 (1.1948)
20. 1949 《畸人集》上海晨光出版公司 (1.1949)
21. 1951 《张天翼选集》北京开明书店 (12.1951)
22. 1952 《罗文应的故事》北京青年出版社
(7.1952)
23. 1959 《给孩子们》北京人民文学出版社
(9.1959)
24. 1961 《夏夜梦》香港东亚书局 (5.1961)
[This collection contains part of the novel 《一年》]
25. 《报复》香港上海书局 (6.1961)
26. 1962 《旅途中》香港建文书局 (8.1962)
- 1963 《速写三篇》北京人民文学出版社
(8.1963)
27. 1979 《张天翼小说选集》北京人民文学出版社
(7.1979)
28. 1980 《张天翼作品选》北京中国少年儿童出版社
(6.1980)
29. 1981 《张天翼短篇小说选集》北京文化艺术出版社
(2.1981)
30. 《张天翼小说选》长沙湖南人民出版社
(4.1981)
31. 《张天翼童话选》长沙湖南人民出版社
(4.1981)

4. Chronological list of editions of Zhang's fiction:

- 1931 《鬼土日记》上海正午书局 (7.1931)
- 1932 《齿轮》上海湖风书店 (30.9.1932)
- 1933 《一年》上海良友图书印刷公司 (1.1.1933)
《脊背与奶子》上海良友图书印刷公司
(19.2.1933)
- 1936 《秃秃大王》上海多样社
- 1937 《奇怪的地方》上海文化生活出版社
(2.1937)
《时代的跳动》上海长江书店 (3.1937)
[Another title for the earlier 《齿轮》]
- 《在城市里》上海良友图书印刷公司
(6.1937)
《秃秃大王》上海文化生活出版社
(7.1937)
- 1953 《营生在家里》北京中国青年出版社 (11.1953)
- 1954 《清明时节》北京作家出版社 (4.1954)

- 1956 《大灰狼》上海少年儿童出版社 (4.1956)
 《大林和小林》北京中国少年儿童出版社
 (11.1956)
- 《不动脑筋的故事》北京中国少年儿童出版社
- 1958 《宝葫芦的秘密》北京中国少年儿童出版社
 (3.1958)
- 《华威先生》北京文字改革出版社 (9.1958)
- 1959 《包氏父子》北京作家出版社 (12.1959)
- 1966 《浮云》香港南华书店 (7.1966)
 [Incomplete version of 《一年》]
- 1980 《金鸭帝国》长沙湖南人民出版社
 (7.1980)
- n.d. 《洋泾浜奇侠》上海新钟书局
 [According to a personal interview with Tang Tao, London, 11 July 1982, this work was published simultaneously with his own work 《海天集》 — a collection of essays — on 30. 5. 1936 by the same Shanghai publisher. The publishing enterprise folded without either Zhang or Tang being paid for their manuscripts.]

5. Chronological list of collections and editions of
Zhang's literary critical works:

- 1935 《创作的經驗》上海天马书店
(1935) contains 《创作的故事》
- 1942 《谈人物描写》重庆作家书屋
(9. 1942)
- 1945 《贾宝玉的出家》东南出版社
(5. 1945)
- 1949 《论阿Q》上海耕耘出版社
(11. 1949) contains 《论阿Q正传》
- 1958 《文学杂评》北京作家出版社
(10. 1958)
- 1982 《张天翼论创作》上海文艺出版社
(10. 1982)
- 1984 《张天翼文学评论集》
北京人民文学出版社
(2. 1984)

APPENDIX C

Critical reviews of works by Zhang Tianyi
and reminiscences by his friends

Critical reviews of works by Zhang Tianyi
and reminiscences by his friends

1. Chinese sources:

A Ying 阿英 (See under Qian Xingcun)

Cao Ming 草明

张天翼和《现实文学》及其他

Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22. 5. 1981) 129-130, 128
SOAS (C. Per. 406501)

Chen Lan 陈蓝

「团圆」

《团圆》

[A review of the short story collection
《团圆》]

Da gong bao wenyi 100 (26. 2. 1936)
PUL (Newspaper collection)

Dongfang weiming 东方未明

「九一八」以后的反日文学

[Contains a review of 《齿轮》]

Wenxue 1:2 (1. 8. 1933) 340-346
PUL (4420)

Dong Long 董老 (Pseudonym of Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白)

画狗罢

[A review of 《鬼土日记》]

Beidou 1:1 (20 9. 1931) 120-121
SOAS (c. 350 c. 83)

Du Yuanming 杜元明

在探索中前进——简谈张天翼的民主革命
时期文学道路

Xiangjiang wenyi 1981:11 (11. 1981) 70-73

从《皮带》看张天翼小说的讽刺艺术特色

Shiyue 1982:3 (5. 1982) 248-250, 227
SOAS (C. Per. 405103)

- Gong Langu 公兰谷
 读“罗文应的故事”
 《现代作品论集》，北京中国青年出版社
 (4. 1957) 156-161
- Gong Zhaolan 龚肇兰 (See under Zhu Jinshun)
- Gu Zhongyi 顾仲彝
 张天翼的短篇小说
Xin Zhonghua 3:7 (10. 4. 1935) 154-157
 PUL (49480)
- Gui Bingquan 桂秉权
 评十一号「冰星」的创作
 [Contains a review of the short story 老明的故事]
Dushu guwen 1:3 (10. 1934) 167-172
 PUL (61310)
- Hu Feng 胡丰
 张天翼论
Wenxue jikan 2:3 (16. 9. 1935) 661-676
 PUL (4690)
- Hu Shengzu 胡绳祖
 「健康的笑」是不是
 [A review of the short story collection 《移行》]
Wenxue 4:2 (1. 2. 1935) 340-347
 SOAS (C. Per. 64027)
- Huang Houxing 黄侯兴 (See under Shen Chengkuan)
- Jiang Feng 蒋风
 张天翼和他的“大林和小林”
 《中国儿童文学讲话》，江苏文艺出版社
 (3. 1959) 32-43
 PL (827. 9/ 526 4)

张天翼的“罗文应的故事”

《中国儿童文学讲话》，江苏文艺出版社

(3. 1959) 73-80

PL (827. 9/ 526 4)

Jiang Muliang 蒋牧良
记张天翼

Wenyi shenghuo (Overseas edition) 7 (15. 10. 1948) 267-280

SFUL (15680)

Jiang Tianzuo 蒋天佐
记张天翼同志几件事

Huacheng 1981:2 (5. 1981) 99-101, 107

SOAS (C. Per. 406503)

Jin Jiang 金江

谈张天翼的童话

《儿童文学作家作品论》，中国少年儿童出版社

(4. 1981) 42-49

Jing Xing 景星
读「小彼得」后

[A review of the short story collection 《小彼得》]

Wenyi xinwen 45 (18. 1. 1932) 4

PUL (3673)

Kang Yong qiu 康咏秋 and Xu Changqi 徐昌启
《华威先生》异议两则

Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan 1984:2

(6. 1984) 277-287

Li Ou 李欧
「路」

Yeying 1:3 (5. 4. 1933) 70-72

PUL (23905)

Li Yishui 李易水

新人张天翼的作品

[A review of Zhang's 1930-31 fiction]

Beidou 1:1 (20. 9 1931) 89-93

SOAS (c. 350 c. 83)

Lin Lin 林林
华威先生赴日
Jiawang ribao (22.2.1939)

425

Ling Bing 凌冰
蜜蜂

[A review of the short story collection 《蜜蜂》]
Xiandai 3:4 (8. 1933) 569-570
PUL (38905)

Liu Bing 流冰

关于「包氏父子」

Zhonghua ribao (27. 4. 1934) 4
PL (Newspaper collection)

Mao Dun 茅盾

《文学季刊》第二期内的创作

[Contains a review of the short story 奇遇]
Wenxue 3:1 (1. 7. 1934)
八月的感想 Wenyi zhendi 1:9 (16.8.1938) 283-4

Ouyang Wenbin 欧阳文彬

张天翼老师二三事

Renwu 1981:3 (8. 5. 1981) 118-122
SOAS (C. Per. 408196)

Qian Xingcun 钱杏邨 (Pseudonym of A Ying 阿英)

1931年中国文坛的回顾 [Contains reviews
of 《小彼得》、《从空虚到充实》、《鬼土日记》]

Beidou 2:1 (20. 1. 1932) 1-24
PUL (11865)

Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白 (See under Dong Long)

Sha Ting 沙汀

张天翼小说选集题记

《张天翼小说选集》，北京人民文学出
版社 (7. 1979) i-vi

SOAS (c. 359 c. 683)

Shen Chengkuan 沈承宽

关于《张天翼的「初作」》真相

Da gong bao (Hong Kong) (14-16. 5. 1981)

Shen Chengkuan 沈承宽
张天翼著作简目

Huacheng 1981:2 (5. 1981) 105-107

SOAS (C. Per. 406503)

Shen Chengkuan, Huang Houxing 黄侯兴, Wu Fuhui 吴福辉
张天翼文学活动年表 (1906-1949)

Xin wenxue shiliao 1981:2 (22. 5. 1981) 272-281, 179

SOAS (C. Per. 406501)

Shen Wu 慎吾
关于张天翼的小说

Tianjin yishi bao 6276 (26. 8. 1933) 10

PUL (Newspaper collection)

Sun Changxi 孙昌熙 and Wang Zhan 王湛
张天翼短篇小说创作特色初探

Liuquan 1980:2 (10. 1980) 128-133

Sun Yu 孙禹
在张天翼伯伯家里

Wen hui bao (20. 1. 1981)

Tang Tao 唐弢
《从空虚到充实》

[A review of the short story collection of the same name]

《晦庵书话》，生活、读书、新知三联书店

(9. 1980) 265-266

SOAS (c. 352 h. 175)

Wang Fuquan 汪馥泉 and Wang Jicong 王集丛

一年来的中国小说 [Contains a review of the

Wang Fuquan 汪馥泉 and Wang Jicong 王集丛

Dushu guwen 1:4 (1. 1935) 96-99

PUL (61310)

- Wang Hua 汪华
 评「畸人集」
Guowen zhoubao 13:30 (3. 8. 1936) 39-43
 PUL (42545)
- Wang Jicong 王集丛 (See under Wang Fuquan)
- Wang Shuming 王淑明
 「洋泾浜奇侠」
Xiandai 5:1 (5. 1934) 209-212
 PUL (38905)
- 「一年」
Wenxue jikan 1:3 (1. 7. 1934) 368-370
 SOAS (C. Per. 64350); PUL (4690)
- Wang Xiyan 王西彦
 面壁撒旦的挑战 [A reminiscence]
Furong 1981:3 (9. 1981) 216-228
 SOAS (C. Per. 409300)
- 张天翼对现实主义的贡献
Wenyi bao 1982: 12 (7. 12. 1982) 40-45
- Wang Zhan 王湛 (See under Sun Changxi)
- Wu Fuhui 吴福耀 (Also see under Shen Chengkuan and
 Wu Zuxiang)
 锋利·新鲜·夸张——试论
 张天翼讽刺小说的人物及其描写艺术
Wenxue pinglun 1980:5 (15. 9. 1980) 31-40
 SOAS (C. Per. 343964)
- Xing Tiehua 邢铁华
 讽刺：对于被否定事物的冷静的箭
 [A critique of the short story collection
 《速写三篇》]
Xin wenxue lun cong 1980:3 (12. 1980) 184-191

Yi Xincheng 易新成
张天翼不会又麻将
[A review of 《洋泾浜奇侠》]
Xiandai 3:2 (1. 6. 1933) 313-314
PL (R 810.5/123 3)

Yue Daiyun 乐黛云
《华威先生》的艺术形象
[A review of 华威先生]
《短篇小说评论集》，北京出版社
(11. 1957) 85-93
NLSI (5734(8))

Zhao Jiabi 赵家璧
三十年代的革命新苗——回忆专
为左联青年作家编印的一套创作丛书
Xin wenxue shiliao 1980:1 (22. 2. 1980) 52-58
SOAS (C. Per. 406501)

Zhao Jingshen 赵景深
张天翼
《文人剪影》，上海北新书局 (4. 1936) 21-22
SL (207399)

Zhou Songdi 周颂棣
我和天翼相处的日子
Huacheng 1981:2 (5. 1981) 93-98
SOAS (C. Per. 406503)

Zhu Jinshun 朱金顺 and Gong Zhaolan 龚肇兰
张天翼的儿童文学创作
Ertong wenxue yanjiu 1980:2 (3. 1980) 140-148

Zhu Yuge 朱羽戈
我之侦探小说杂评
Banyue 2:19 (14.6. 1923)
PUL (11030)

List of newspapers and periodicals that appear above:

Beidou	《北斗》
Da gong bao	《大公报》
Da gong bao wenyi	《大公报文艺》
Dushu guwen	《读书顾问》
Ertong wenxue yanjiu	《儿童文学研究》
Furong	《芙蓉》
Guo wen zhou bao	《国文周报》
Huacheng	《花城》
Liuquan	《流泉》
Renwu	《人物》
Shiyue	《十月》
Tianjin yishi bao	《天津益世报》
Wen hui bao	《文汇报》
Wenxue	《文学》
Wenxue jikan	《文学季刊》
Wenxue pinglun	《文学评论》
Wenyi shenghuo	《文艺生活》
Wenyi xinwen	《文艺新闻》
Xiandai	《现代》
Xiangjiang wenyi	《湘江文艺》
Xin wenxue lun cong	《新文学论丛》
Xin wenxue shiliao	《新文学史料》
Xin Zhonghua	《新中华》
Yeying	《夜莺》
Zhonghua ribao	《中华日报》

2. Japanese sources

Itō Keiichi 伊藤敬一
张天翼再论

Jinbun gaku ho 36 (1963) 139-151

CUL

Shinko 张天翼 小说

《中国关系论说资料》 (Volume 11) (3. 1969) 474-485
《中国关系论说资料》 (Volume 11) (3. 1969) 474-485

CUL (FB 42.38/11)

APPENDIX D

Translations of selected works

Bad Dream

The bright moon had just appeared in the sky, and I felt as lonely as death at that moment. I seemed to be wide awake but my body was already in a broad open plain. Suddenly I heard sounds of shouting on all sides, so I quickly hid myself amongst the long grasses. Eight soldiers of that certain country came marching along with rifles on their shoulders. They all wore ferocious expressions. They were holding two Chinese prisoner. These two Chinese looked very startled and were weeping, just as though they were prisoners awaiting death. Then I suddenly realised that I was already a slave in a country with no future. Thinking of this I became very angry, and wanted to rush out and kill those soldiers. My strength, however, deserted me. I lay dejectedly on the grass, and lamented: "When that certain country made representations to my country, our people were up in arms, and the academic world was particularly incensed. Students boycotted classes and made speeches, and fearlessly risking life and limb, wrote slogans everywhere advocating the boycott of that certain country's goods. At this time everybody awakened to what was going on, and resented that country's people to the core. Alas! Has it not now finally reached the point where the nation has perished?" I still recall that when I cleared my throat and declaimed, my listeners' faces were visibly moved. I am going to write down the events of that time and reveal them to my readers. You must realise our courage at that time. Even if there were a hundred blades prodding our chests, there was no question of our being fainthearted. Several hundred students would band together, and observing that there were goods of that certain country in a shop, they would ransack it, set the store alight and raze it to the ground. The flames would blaze and the sound of clapping would shake the sky. We thought after this that that certain country was sure to be defeated. But we were wrong as things turned out. In the end they destroyed our country. Surely this could not have been predicted?

At that time when the people of that certain country bullied us, the whole nation was very angry, especially students, who

would shout in loud voices "Long live China." I too made speeches everywhere I went, saying: "Our country is in a precarious state. If we continue to stand by and do nothing the nation will sink into total disintegration." When I said this much, the tears streamed down my face. My audience became very excited. I raised my arm, and stabbed my arm with a knife. The blood poured gurgling out. Using my own blood and shaking with emotion I wrote up the words "Be patriotic". Some of my listeners were weeping, some were shouting loudly. They reviled the people of that certain country, shouting "Kill those rotten devils". Some people said: "From now on if anyone sees one of that country's people, he must skin him and eat him". After they had shouted this, their veins stood out, and they ground their teeth ferociously for a very long time. They looked ready to commit murder. I was secretly happy at heart, feeling that we could well prove victorious. And now even though this country of ours has fallen, the scar on my left arm can still faintly be seen. Alas! Just thinking of it is enough to make one weep.

My family ran a shop that sold household goods. As soon as shouts were raised to boycott goods from that certain country, I became full of hatred towards our shop. Half of the goods that made up our stock were from that country. Because I lamented the demise of our nation, I was particularly keen that we should not order that certain country's goods again. I said that if our country's money flowed abroad, our country would become increasingly poor. For this reason I brought the matter to my father's attention. He was very angry and said: "Why do you go on so about this? If I did not deal in that country's goods how could I make a profit?" I said: "Of course you are right about the need to make a profit, but when the nation perishes you will even go hungry, and yet you still speak of profit." Then I repeated what I had told him about my sorrow at China's demise. My father said: "What you say has some foundation, but of our four hundred million compatriots, you are alone in your awareness. Though you are patriotic, I am worried lest other people may be apathetic. Of what help then will such

patriotism be?" I said: "Everyone is preoccupied with this matter. If everyone thought like you, our country would have perished long ago." Having said this, I went on to tell my father at length of our diplomatic defeat which had led the people of that certain country to go on the rampage. My father became most irate and ended by throwing the goods of that certain country onto the fire. This resulted in a huge loss. People of my generation made speeches wherever they went, and also handed out leaflets. All of my fellow countrymen shouted in protest as with one voice, and that certain country seemed abashed and yielded a little as a consequence. Articles in the papers declared that the students were the new masters of China. As students initiated things at this time China might have flourished. If they had spurred things on more, the situation would have been even better. Even those who were still worried about the nation felt jubilant. Alas and alack! What is there one can say now? I cannot tell where the bravery of that time has gone to. We are the subjects of others. We have submissively become slaves in a country that has perished. As I gaze ahead, I feel I can vaguely make out the flag of that certain country brightly masking our nation's flag. My eyes are already brimming over with tears. At that time we were on top, but the people of that certain country derided our superiority calling it a five-minute fever. They meant that although we had the upper hand to be sure at the time, after five minutes our strength was completely exhausted. But these things encouraged us to further our efforts. The situation was like this for several months, almost without a quiet day. Even if a dog saw someone from that certain country, it barked noisily, seeming to say: "We dogs hate you too." Peoples' voices may be bubbling with excitement this year, but next year they will be calm again. Then commentators will fall silent. All the markets are madly dealing in that certain country's goods for the sake of profit, but this time it seems that there are no hot-blooded students with the kind of courage necessary to rise up once again. I too am apathetic, and at heart I seem to feel that patriotism is no match for profit-seeking. So for this reason, that certain country is making

progress. In the end they will finish off our country and our lives will be endangered. Will there be any chance of making a profit then? Alas! It has reached the point where everything is finished. We are incapable of resistance, and there is no means left whereby one can voice this sorrow. Those who were previously accused of being passionate for five minutes have unfortunately really hit the mark. A young student observing that our nation was already finished became exceedingly angry and spat pints and pints of blood. He sighed and said: "When we boycotted that certain country's goods, I thought that China might rise up, but after a few days passions gradually dissipated. At first I thought that since everyone had become politically aware that certain country was sure to withdraw, and even if they did not withdraw, I still thought their evil doings would become less. And yet how could I have imagined the ruin of our country?" He threw himself in the river and drowned. This happened to a fellow student of mine. At this time I was still lying in the grass and I could still vaguely make out the sound of crying. It sounded like weeping over the demise of our country. Each of these sounds pained me to the very bottom of my heart, and I howled in grief, and pounded my chest unremittingly. And then I woke to find it was only a dream after all. But when I looked at the corners of my eyes there were still traces of tears, and I could still vaguely hear the sound of lamentation ringing in my ears. On an impulse, I put my clothes on and went to tell Wuzheng about this, saying that this material could be worked up into a piece of fiction.

The Axe

My friend Xu Changyun has recently been terribly busy. He has been investigating cases in lots of different places. As I take up my pen to write this Changyun is at this very moment rushing about between Shanghai, Nanjing and Suzhou. Needless to say he is busy with investigations; I, however, have my own affairs to attend to and cannot accompany him. He often sends me casebook letters. In the future I must present what he has sent me to my readers. As for the cases that he has recently investigated in this area, these too are quite numerous. Firstly because the plots were not very good, and secondly because I am by nature lazy, I did not record them. There was only the case of the diamond robbery five days ago which was particularly extraordinary, but after this case was cracked several people were hostile towards Changyun and me, and so I did not then record it in my notebook. I myself know that this is something for which I must apologise to the reader, but this certainly was not something that I can be blamed for.

I did not have anything to do today and I suddenly remembered Tan Jiezhen's case. Jiezhen is a naive and artless little boy. He is only six. His father, when he was alive, had been one of our fellow students. Later on, he suddenly went missing. On the day in question, the weather was bitterly cold. The sky was suffused with grey, as though it were trying to tell us that it was about to snow. On top of this, a strong wind howled ceaselessly. There were very few people on the roads. Changyun and I warmed ourselves by the stove. After a short time, it started to snow. I shrugged and said: "A detective's life is really dull." At first Changyun had his eyes closed but when he heard me say this, he opened them, and smiled and said: "What's the matter?" "When things are busy, they are terribly busy," I said, "but when there isn't anything going on it gives people no choice but to be idle." Changyun said that I was wrong, because when we were busy we became over-tired, so a

quiet spell like this allowed us to rest a while. "Is there anything wrong with this?" he asked. I laughed: "You really put that perfectly." And as I said this, Changyun laughed too. Reader, I want you to know that my friend's temper is very strange. He is extremely affable to those whom he respects, always having a smile for them. But if he despises someone, the person might almost mistake him for a dumb person. Just then, he went on to say: "You say that when no cases develop the detective has no choice but to be idle, but in a world as large as this, with people as numerous as they are, goodness knows how many cases are developing simultaneously. We, however, know nothing about them." And so saying he took a look out of the window. One could see that the snow was falling more and more heavily. The snow on the tiles of the roof opposite had quickly formed a thick layer. On the road there was someone walking very quickly in our direction. Changyun shrugged and said: "There's some news on its way." Soon after he had finished saying this, the door opened to a knock, and Zuo Quan came in carrying a visiting card. I took a look at it, and saw that it bore the name Tan Jieben. The visitor came straight in and placed his umbrella to one side; he nodded slightly at Changyun. Changyun then asked him to sit down. The visitor panted for breath, and used his handkerchief to wipe the sweat on his forehead. Still gasping for breath he blurted out: "Mr. Xu I'm sure you could think of a way"

Changyun poured him a cup of tea, and told him to sit closer to the fire, and that when he had composed himself he should say what he had to say. I raised my eyes and looked at him, and observed his expression which was terribly pitiable. He was only about twenty. He drank a mouthful of tea and licked his lips. Then he said: "I'm really unlucky. My aunt is in a terrible fix. In fact this trouble has only come about because of my carelessness. I really did her a disservice. My uncle's name is Wu quan". "Oh," I interrupted, "Tan Wuquan. Wasn't he one of our fellow students." Changyun nodded slightly. Our visitor went on: "My uncle died five years ago. My aunt and uncle had an exceedingly good relationship. After uncle

died, my aunt would not agree to marry again. She wholeheartedly threw herself into bringing up Jiezhen. Jiezhen was only six this year. He is naive and unaffected, and a lot of fun. I find him fascinating, and often take him out (to play). That afternoon at about one or two o'clock Actually it was yesterday around one or two o'clock. I took him to the hill to play. Although the hill is not very big, the scenery is very pretty, and there are a lot of trees. I had only been up there a moment before I went back home to get my sketching equipment so that I could do a drawing. Jiezhen tagged along. Whilst I sketched, he watched what I was doing and talked to me. He asked me questions about all sorts of things. After a while he went off again to play. The hill was too constricting so when he went away, I was not worried, for after a while he would come back again. He went off and returned several times in this way. Once more he went off to the far side of the hill, and for a long time did not come back. I waited until I had finished my drawing and then shouted to him a few times. When I did not get an answer I was very surprised, so I stood on the top of the hill and looked all around, but there was no sign of him. And what is more when I went to the other side of the hill to look for him I still could not find him. I shouted some more times, but even though I shouted until I was hoarse, there was still no reply. There was nothing else for it but to put down my sketching things and search everywhere. But no matter how I searched I still could not find him. I also went and looked in the wood near the hill, but there was no trace of him there either. I wondered whether it was possible that he had gone back home, but as soon as I asked on my return home, the answer was negative too. When I told the people at home about all this, the whole household went into a panic. Aunty was particularly agitated. She sent people to search the whole of the surrounding neighbourhood. The result was that they finally failed to find him. The strangest thing is that we live in this remote area and we did not see anyone that day. Could Jiezhen have run off on his own somewhere else? Later on, we also sent people to look at South Star Bridge, and to ask

at the railway station whether or not they had seen the child. All the answers were negative. So, today I have come here to seek your advice." Changyun said: "Carefully see if you can recall whether you met any strangers yesterday." Tan Jieben pondered a moment and then said: "There was only a fellow from the Jianggan Timber Company who came in the morning. I don't know what he came to fetch. Their company is run by our family. When he came, he also played with Jiezhen for a while. He went on about the child being adorable." "And in the afternoon?" Changyun asked. "No one came," Jieben answered.

Changyun asked: "Are there many people living in the area where you live?" "There are quite a few people on the near side of the hill," said Jieben, "but on the other side there are very few people indeed. We also went and asked the few people on this side, but they all said that he hadn't been there." I said: "Perhaps someone is playing a prank. If Jiezhen had gone to someone's house, that person would deliberately say that he hadn't." Jieben nodded and said: "Perhaps there are people like that, I wouldn't know. The people who live in the area are, however, all business people. They spend all day working their abacuses and still don't manage to finish their accounting. Who would have time to play such a prank? And yet I suppose Jiezhen could have gone to one of their houses, and finding him a delightful child, they might have played with him. But he would not have played all this long time." Changyun said: "What about the other side of the hill?" "They are all thatched cottages," said Jieben, "and there is also a river. The scenery is very beautiful." Changyun said: "Could there possibly be a house at the bottom of the far side of the hill?" Jieben said: "There is one house, but its door is locked, and no one lives there." "Did you go and ask at the thatched cottages on the far side of the hill?" asked Changyun. "They all belong to farmers," said Jieben, "I also went and asked them, but in the end I drew a blank Mister Xu. This is a very urgent matter. I really do hope you will do your best." Changyun nodded several times in succession and said: "Fine, fine. In any case, we are not busy at the moment." Jieben looked at his watch and then stood up,

stretched and said: "Would it be alright if you went with me, gentlemen?" Changyun then stood up too, thought a moment and said: "Alright. Renzhi, you are tired of having nothing to do, so you might as well come too. When we come back you are sure to have enough new material to allow you to show off your penmanship. Ha! Ha!" By this time the snow had already stopped. The sky gradually brightened. I thought that before long the sun would come out. Then I too got up. When we were all ready, the three of us went out together. When we had reached the station and bought our tickets, we boarded the train that goes direct to Zha Kou. It had already been arranged for three sedan chairs to meet us.

The Tan's house was a very long way from the station; about 7 miles. When we arrived there, the people of the household came out to greet us. On finding out that we had agreed to assist, they were all very pleased. We also saw Wu quan's wife. She had known us for a long time. She too spoke about the matter and expressed her anxiety. What she said matched pretty well with what Jieben had said. As she had been widowed at an early age, she was often sad at heart. Only the sweet and innocent Jiezhen could console her. If Jiezhen really was lost, that would mean for her that life had lost its meaning. My friend and I did our utmost to console her. We said he was sure to be found so what need was there for anxiety. We talked for a while, and then we took our leave and went out. Jieben led us to the top of the little hill. Even though he said it was a small hill, it was nonetheless very high. There were some fine trees on the hill. The trees were decked with snow that was gleaming white. Standing on top of the hill, we gazed in every direction. The snowscape was very pretty. Whenever the birds alighted on the pine branches, the snow on the branches would noiselessly drop down. It was a pity we had not come to admire the scenery. Jieben then pointed to a spot and said: "This is the place where I did my sketch yesterday. There are a lot of dead trees on this hill, so when Jiezhen walked away a couple of steps, he disappeared from view" Just as he was saying this,

someone suddenly came running up the mountain. Jiehen hurriedly asked what the matter was. The man said: "Madam asks you gentlemen to come quickly because some news has arrived." So we went down the hill together to her house. Wu quan's wife said to us: "I've just received an anonymous letter", and so saying, she took out the letter. The letter was written in pencil, and the calligraphy was old fashioned. Some of the characters had been written in a good hand which looked very attractive. The letter said: For the attention of Wu quan's wife. I love this child, Jiezhen, very much, so I have carried him off and am looking after him very well. Please put your mind at rest. There will come a time when I shall return him to you. In three or four days or as much as three or four years, when the time is ripe, I shall return him to you. If you are afraid that he may lose three or four years education, in that case I guarantee that I will give him a fair education; I will certainly not cause him to stop studying. Jiezhen is very pleased to be living at my place. I brought him here because I love him. The reason I am writing you this letter is to put your mind at rest. If you are too agitated it will ruin your health. At all costs don't ignore my words.

There was no name written at the foot of the letter, only a drawing of an axe. I laughed involuntarily. Everyone else began to laugh too. I said: "This fellow really is very humorous From the look of this axe, perhaps some gang or other has taken this as its symbol." Changyun nodded and said: "Perhaps so. By sending this letter to console the people here, his intention would seem to be to tell her not to send people to investigate, so that he would have time to put his plan into effect." I said: "What is the point of their kidnapping Jiezhen? And what is this gang? Are these not the two things that we would so like to find out more about?" Changyun nodded twice very profoundly, as though he considered my words to be quite correct. Then we once more went on to the hill. We went to the far side of the hill.

One thatched cottage was all that was to be seen. It had been built against the hill. Xu Changyun said: "I think that this thatched cottage plays an important part in this case." And so saying, he asked Jieben: "Didn't you say that no one lived in this cottage?" Jieben nodded and said: "That's quite correct. This house has a lock on it." As he said this, he walked over to the door of the cottage. Jieben gasped: "Could it be possible that there are people now living here? There's no lock on it." Changyun went on to ask: "Whose house is this?" Jieben answered: "I really don't know, nor do I know when it was built, because in the summer holidays this building wasn't here. When I came back this Spring Festival, I discovered this building. Not even any of the people at home had noticed it." Changyun muttered under his breath: "What does it matter whether it is inhabited or not? We will have a better idea once we have gone inside." Then he pushed open the door and went in. One could see a ramshackle table leaning in front of the window. A rickety chair stood beside the table. On the table there lay some scraps of paper. The most eye-catching thing was the middle of the table for there in the pile of scrap paper was a very sharp-bladed steel axe. It was exactly the same in shape as the axe drawn on the anonymous letter. My friend picked up the axe and looked at it carefully. One could see that it had been exquisitely made. A line of characters were carved on it that said: A Chinese product made by the Huaxing Company No.133. Changyun rifled through the pile of scrap paper and found a pencil. Changyun scribbled a few strokes on a piece of paper and said to me: "Renzhi, he used this pencil to write that letter." I then took the pencil and looked at it. It was an American 3B pencil. Changyun looked carefully all round. Over in one corner was a stove. On top of it there was a kettle. Apart from this stove, there was also another one. And on top of this one there was a 'wok', beside it was a vat with a lid on top. When he lifted the lid, he found it was full of water. When Changyun had looked at everything, he chuckled involuntarily and said:

"This cottage is fully equipped." He went on to say to himself: "This room has certainly had people living in it, but what about the bed, and foodstuffs? There are none of these in this room. Probably there is another room. Hm, Renzhi, cheer up, cheer up. There must be a secret room as well, that we do not know about yet." When Jieben saw my friend in this state, he was extremely astonished. His eyes were glued to my friend. My friend took no notice at all, and said: "If you can find that secret room, Renzhi, we'll discover the whereabouts of Jiezhen. And so saying his gimlet eyes scoured the floor. Suddenly he crouched down and called out: "Come quickly, come quickly." Then we all crouched down. Changyun was pointing at a piece of ground and said: "Look. The floor in this room is earth. There is only this patch here which is paved, so it can be seen that Come on. We'll lift it up." This flag stone had cracks all round it. The three of us heaved together. We pulled it free. Below was pitch darkness; one could not see a thing. Changyun flashed his torch into the blackness. A ladder was there so he went down. Jieben and I followed him. My heart was going pit-a-pat and I shivered several times in succession. Changyun looked all round. It was a square hole that was ventilated, but there was not a bit of light in the place. And there were no people to be seen. There was, however, a bed. At the head of the bed was a rickety table. Beside the pillow, was a fingered citron. On the table there were also sweets made by the Mayushan Company. Beside the table was a box. When the top was opened, one could see that it was full of dry foods. Apart from these things there was nothing else. So we went out again. Jieben said: "Have you worked it out?" Changyun did not answer. Jieben then sighed and said: "Heavens. Only Jiezhen himself knows where he is". Changyun cast a glance at him and said: "Don't worry. This matter can be solved within a short time." Just at this moment I suddenly got a headache, and felt baffled by this business. It didn't hold any interest for me so I thought I might as well go home. I told Changyun my intention and Jieben ordered the sedan chair carrier to take me to the station. When I was just about to go,

my friend seemed at that moment to be lost in thought. Suddenly he said to me: "Renzhi, if you really must go back now and there is no way of stopping you, I'll come back a little later. I'm sure to have good news to report to you." And so saying, he once more went into the thatched cottage.

I returned home alone, thinking that my friend had surely failed today. Although we had gone into the underground cellar there was still no one to be found. Not only did I not understand this kind of case, but I thought he too was perhaps baffled. Now I did not know what time he would eventually come home. And when he should come back, I had no idea whether or not the case would have been solved. I was extremely keen to know these things. By this time my headache had stopped. I was just fed up that had it not been for my headache at that time I could still be there with my friend, and be able to watch him trying to crack the case, thus avoiding the frustration of sitting at home. I had already heard the clock strike six. Zuo Quan then brought in the dinner. In winter the days are short and the nights long. By six it was already very dark. So I picked a novel at random from the bookshelf to read. I found this waiting time most hard to bear. Another half an hour passed slowly by. Suddenly I heard someone climbing the stairs. I thought this surely must be Changyun. And to be sure it was. When Changyun came in his face was wreathed in smiles, as though to say that the outcome of this case was very satisfactory. As soon as he came in, he laughed and said: "Ha! Ha! Renzhi, you will never guess the outcome of this case." Then he sat down and asked: "Is your headache better?" "It's better. It's better", I replied, "I just regret that I had to come home early. And now I am still in the dark." My friend laughed and said: "My dear old friend, I'll tell you the story from beginning to end. When I came out of the cellar, I thought that this time I had surely failed. But then I thought some more. From the look of the room, there certainly had been people living there. Because they were afraid that people might find out, they went to live in the cellar. But how could it be that we had not seen

anyone? If they had gone out, they would surely have locked the door so as not to attract peoples' attention. Since the door wasn't locked of course there must still be people inside. Probably they were afraid of being discovered by us, and were hiding somewhere. So with this thought in mind, when you went home, Jieben and I once more went down together. This was the really surprising thing. When we went down this time, there was still no one to be seen. Then I got my torch and looked all round. After all there was another big box at the foot of the bed. It was merely because the room was too dark that to begin with we had not seen it. So I lifted the lid off the box, and saw a man crouching inside, and there was also a little child there. There was a lot of space in the box. Even with two people hiding there, there was still room and to spare. At this moment the man who was crouching there stood up and climbed out of the box. The little child also got out from the box, and jumped up in front of Jieben and said: "How did you get here, brother?" That fellow looked at me closely and suddenly blurted out: "Eh! Aren't you Changyun?" "And so saying he stroked his beard. Renzhi, do you know who it was? After all this man was none other than our old fellow student Tan Wuquan. "Ah! Amazing," I interrupted, "so he didn't die five years ago? How come he did not die and also how could he do such an unthinkable thing?" "You had better hear me out," my friend replied, "at that moment everyone was amazed. Then Wuquan gave us a brief explanation. He also warned me not to spread the story about. Five years ago when he went out one day, he bumped into an enemy. At that time he was living in a hotel. His enemy was staying there too. He knew that his enemy was a rascal who was not afraid of the law. He was sure this enemy wanted to lay his murderous hands on him, so he wrote a letter to his family, saying that he had met with an enemy and would shortly be dead. He would die in the sea, so there was no need to try and dredge for the corpse. Later on, the two of them actually fought. There was no one else around. But there was a friend of Wuquan who had seen the two of them go out. So thinking that he was surely dead,

this friend wrote a letter to Wuquan's wife, and also took his belongings from the hotel to his home. This was what Wuquan had instructed him to do. When in fact the two of them fought, Wuquan pushed his enemy who fell into the water. But Wuquan knew that his enemy might not die and even if he should die, there were still several other members of the gang who would come looking for him. So because of this he pretended to run away. Who would have thought that his enemy had not actually died, and wherever Wuquan went, his enemy followed. And after passing through many places he fled here, and lived in the cellar. He began to worry about his son, and feared that he might fall into the hands of his enemy, so he carried Jiezhen off. But he did not dare to tell his family, out of fear that the news might slowly filter through to his enemy. And yet if he did not say anything he was also afraid that his family would be worried, so he wrote that letter. Renzhi, you surely know what that axe in the letter meant. Long ago he had taken the name 'Tan the Axe'. He also possessed a small axe for purposes of self-defence, so he drew one like it as a kind of secret sign, thinking that his wife would remember. As it happened, his wife had forgotten. Now that his wife knows about all this, she is both astonished and delighted. The whole family are exceedingly pleased. So this is the outcome of this case. "Ho! Ho! Renzhi, could you have imagined this?" When I heard this, I could only shrug. My friend also said: "Old friend, it would however be better if you didn't write about this matter, for I fear that his enemy might find out."

I have now heard that Wuquan's enemy is already dead. Wuquan can go about freely without fear. One day he came to our place, so I asked him: "How did you come to be that man's enemy? What feud did he have with you?" And only then did Wuquan tell us that his father had been an official in the Qing dynasty. His enemy and his enemy's elder brother had both been robbers. The elder brother killed someone and was captured and put to death by Wuquan's father. Because of this

the feud started. One night he came to Wuquan's house, and Wuquan knocked him down the stairs. His left arm was broken, and this added to the bad blood between the two men. He said: "Your father is dead and I cannot get my revenge on him. Now all I can do is kill you or make sure your line does not continue." Wuquan dismissed the matter with a laugh. But who was to know whether he would actually carry out his threat. Yet now, Wuquan's enemy is already dead, and there is nothing to prevent me, so I have recorded this case.

Towards a New Road

The pale yellow sunlight was very gloomy and dull as it shone weakly into the grey little room. She was sleeping on the bed, her face the colour of moonlight shining on black rock. Her eyes were half open. The pain in her stomach made her begin to cry out, but her cry was too small, too frail, almost soundless, so that it turned out to be a moan. The air all around had become extremely clammy and dark with her breathing. The mother of the invalid was sitting silently, her heart pounding and her muscles twitching.

Her moans became even quieter, even frailer; she closed her eyes and went to sleep.

She went to sleep, but she did not dream; there was nothing more that she wanted to obtain from the world of dreams.

She was an aficionado of Death. She had dreamed a lot, and in her dreams she had found the frightful lover that she had been craving. Her lover eloped with her to the land of darkness that she had dreamed about, and thus she ended her worldly sorrow. But in the end dreams are only dreams, and when she understood that she was still within her white mosquito net, and her room was still the miserable room that she was used to seeing - when she knew that her lover was after all an illusion - she began to feel sorrowful, and uttered curses: she cursed Life.

She cursed it everlastingly, she cursed it with great zest; the beauty of Life, the joy of Life were not for her, and Fate which was mincing along in the realm of Life was even more her enemy. Fate was toying with her, scorning her. But her earliest ideal lover had been Fate; she had hoped that Fate would console her. She had also previously dreamed many dreams, conjured many fantasies, hoping to gain from them what she was hoping for in her present dreams, her present fantasies, but Fate's radiance had never once shone upon her. And yet she still went on dreaming.

Not only did Fate fail to bring His radiance to light up her route, Fate also used every possible method to humiliate her, mock her, and finally He pushed her so that she fell into a hopeless pit one hundred thousand feet deep. It was only then that she realised that He had no affection for her, harboured no good intentions towards her: she flew into a rage, and as a result she abandoned all the dreams she had ever dreamed, even though when she finally made her resolution to do this, she did not do so without reluctance. After this she yearned for the comfort of Death. This, like most other people's dream history was her dream history.

Her mother was sitting, watching her daughter's face, her marble face, whose expression was exceedingly lonely, exceedingly quiet; the snow-like blanket that covered her rose and fell almost imperceptibly. Without a doubt, she was already completely within Death's grasp, and either shortly or within a day or two He would surely lead her off. At that time, she would satisfy, she would satisfy her sole desire: she had found her lover, and presently she would be able to realise her dream, whilst her link with the world of Life that she had cursed would be severed forever That thoroughly evil, senseless Life had treated her so falsely!

Her wish would soon be granted: she comforted herself with this thought. There would always come a day - and just such a day would presently occur - when her ideal lover would grasp her hand and lead her along a new road. This would bring to an end her worldly sorrows and she would embark on her joyful existence! What a splendid day that would be! And this kind of splendid day can only happen once in a lifetime; afterwards how pleased she would be! After this she began to prepare, to prepare for her frightening and adorable lover to come and collect her.

Her haggard-looking mother simply sat vacant and lonely. It was as though there was a hole in the heart of this old lady, which needed something to fill it to make it better;

she felt that she was waiting for something, but she could not put a name to the person who could come to this grey room: it would not be her husband, and it would not be her daughter's child. She was nonetheless waiting in expectation.

The invalid's son came back from buying medicine, and the very soft sound of his footsteps destroyed the silence. The regular rise and fall of the white blanket suddenly changed; she had awoken. She half-opened her eyes, and turned her head to look at her mother and look at her son.

To her, her mother and son both seemed to have hideous expressions, and above their dark grey cheeks their eyes blazed.

In the evening her temperature rose. There were several people sitting silently outside the door to her room awaiting the unwelcome command.

She went to sleep on her back. By the time the light from the lamp shone onto the top of her mosquito net, it had long since turned black; as she gazed at the black top of her mosquito net, all she could see was a blurred patch, which one moment seemed close, the next moment far away, now rising, now falling.

This made her feel a little frightened; but there was also something strange above the top of her mosquito net: above it, it looked as though there were black wheels spinning. At the same time she also heard a noise, like footsteps.

She said: "Who is it?"

But there was no reply. Who could be coming, with such soft steps but which at the same time seemed to be produced by a large pair of feet? Could it be her mother, or her father, or her son; and there were the doctor and maids too, none of whom walked like this? And so she looked out through the flap of her mosquito net, and saw, she saw a peculiar thing. She suddenly felt that her body had shrunk a great deal.

"Who are you?" She saw a huge black thing, walking clumsily towards her one step at a time, which made her ask this question with a tremulous voice.

The black thing looked human, but its shape was very indistinct. She felt gusts of cold air, and thought her body was becoming smaller and smaller; a sort of tense anxiety made her skin creep.

"Who are you? Tell me at once who you are! Ah!"

The black monster came closer, and she involuntarily hid beneath her bedclothes. The monster laughed ferociously at her.

"What have you come to do? Who are you?"

But the monster did not reply, simply coming closer to the bed one step at a time. There was no need for the monster to answer her question, because she already knew intuitively who it was. It was the person she had been hoping for, her perfect lover. But she was afraid, she was terrified, her body was writhing wildly as though she wanted to wriggle to a safe place where she might hide.

The black person had already reached her bedside. Her dry eyes gazed emptily at him and she held her head in her hands.

"Go away, go away! Who told you to come?"

He said: "Weren't you hoping that I would come?"

She began to shout: "No, not now Go away, hurry up and go away! Ah!"

"But why do you think of me in your dreams then?"

"Ah! Terrible, terrible!"

Her body crumpled, and she began shouting wildly, calling for her mother in a loud voice.

Several people came into the room, and gazed at her distantly. Her mother's eyes were already wet with tears. She sat by the bed, and felt her brow, as she shouted out. But the black person was still not keen to go away. She pushed him but he did not move. There was nothing she could do and she was infinitely frightened.

"Mother, mother, where are you, where are you?"

"I'm here, here, right by your side." And she continued to call her name several times in succession.

"Where? Quickly send him away, send him out of the room! I am afraid of him"

"Who? Who? There is no one here".

"This man, this man hurry up and go away, I have no need of you, And where is father?"

Her father was standing at the window: "I'm here". He walked closer to the bed, but she did not see her father, she just heard the sound of his voice.

"Quickly get rid of this person for me, this black one".

Her father sighed, and said to her mother: "Quickly go and ask for Mr. Jin".

When all the terrifying people around her had disappeared, she became as silent as before. She thought of the fearfulness of the lover she had dreamed about, but at the same time she once more felt the return of the pain in her belly. She felt as though she was suspended in air, and she was painfully aware of how empty the air was.

The morning sunlight came amicably in through the window of her room. The sunlight seemed almost as though it was smiling, and the sky all around had been made pale by the sunlight, so that it had become a white backcloth to its radiance. She gazed at the sunshine, and felt contented; its strong rays of light shone into her eyes. She closed her eyes, and then she saw an extremely bright red patch of colour. It seemed a long time since she had last seen such a bright red, so much so that it made her experience a sort of inexplicable thrill of happiness, even though her belly was exceedingly painful to her.

The comfortable temperature in the room, the equable air, made her feel capable of contentment. She smiled, and her smiling face seemed to say: "Perhaps Fate still has some affection for me."

But what about the discomfort that her body had suffered, what about her illness which Mr. Jin had called abdominal tuberculosis? Could these things have possibly made her enjoy all the more a bit of pleasant air? She also knew herself that she would not again have the chance to wander in the world of the living; she would immediately undergo a great change; she would go to another country to live. She did not, however, wish to think about it, because it was too sad. She despaired of the lover she had dreamed about, and was afraid of the black road she was about to travel along. She asked her mother: "Will my illness get better?"

"Mr. Jin says your illness is not serious, and it will get better; there is no need for you to worry about it", her mother said.

"Surely he said what my illness is called."

"He says that there is something a little wrong with your abdomen."

"Is it really not serious?"

"It's not serious".

She knew that people all over the world use such phrases as "It's not serious" to console invalids, but this seemed to her to be an exception: she drew a moment's comfort from her mother's words. She thought that perhaps it would not come to the point where she would have to go to the land of terror; but on the other hand she did not have the power to decide for herself.

For a moment, however, she once more thought of the white eyes of Fate whom she had met, and when the pain in her belly eased a little, she reproached herself for being a weakling!

"Is it certain that I have no alternative but to proceed along that road?" she asked herself.

The effect of the black person who had suddenly entered her room the previous evening still had not worn off. His heavy footsteps, His ferocious smile, the cold blasts of air that issued from His body, made the flesh all over her body begin to twitch.

The joy of the new life that she had dreamed about was still after all a hazy prospect.

Dr. Jin arrived, and she asked him as usual: "Will I get better"?

"Your illness is not in the least serious".

But as soon as Dr. Jin went out of the door of the invalid's room, his face became extremely stern, and he began to talk in a low voice to her father and mother, and they sighed softly.

She could vaguely make out these sounds that boded ill. In consequence her nerves went on edge.

A general feeling of terror came over her and when she saw the calm expression on her mother's face, almost as though she was already peaceably waiting for something, she felt even more frightened. She certainly would not have admitted that she loved Life; she had never considered this kind of question.

This evening she felt very comfortable, more comfortable than the previous day. She was very alert, and all fearful influences seemed to have lost their place in her mind. She could not conceive of Death, and she did not think about Life, and her past pain and future terror, all seemed to have vanished like smoke into the air. The pain in her belly was much less; and the light from the lamp was very bright.

No matter what her surroundings or the atmosphere around her were like, they made her feel comfortable and contented. She heard them discussing her in low voices, and they seemed to have a peculiar and optimistic note in their voices, so that she began to smile with a happy heart.

After she had chatted with her mother a little while, she went to sleep.

Everything seemed very tranquil, very optimistic.

The sunshine the next day could not alleviate her distress.

She was moaning. Once more black wheels were turning above the white mosquito net. She curled up, and her whole body began to quake with fear.

Before long she heard the sound of heavy footfalls. Her perceptions became confused, irremediably. But before long she once more opened her eyes; she felt an enormous pain. She moaned a few times.

After that everything fell silent.

The Black Smile

This is such terribly black air, this is such terribly frightening air!

Look, night is as lofty as this, as huge as this, and it reaches out both its arms to embrace everything. It makes a grimace so that all living things make no noise, so that all living things are expunged. What else is there besides on the earth? Everything is the territory of the empire of darkness; the power of darkness extends to the ends of heaven, making the limits of the earth impossible for man to find. From outside the window the silence has suddenly entered, the death-like silence, and that withered tree is still sticking up into the air, and in contrast with the dark blue of the sky it seems to have turned into black dry bones, but it is keeping quiet, so that even if it is ruffled by a breeze, it still does not dare to raise its hands in protest. And apart from this, apart from this there is a sky full of pockmark-like stars twinkling.

Truly, the living things are all truly keeping silent, be they male or female they have all gone off to take a rest. They are snoring rhythmically, softly and happily, and the sound of their snores blows away the terror of the dark night. They do not know of the existence of the terror of the dark night; quite the opposite they have obtained the happiness that is bestowed by the night. As for workers, their exhaustion after a day's work makes them get a completely sound sleep from the night; as for youngsters, the night has bestowed on them lots of sweet romantic dreams. This apart, night has also drawn a large black cloth to conceal sexual activities - in this epoch it is considered disgusting, and is something that they do not breathe a word about during the daylight hours. What bounty is bestowed on them by the night! But towards me, towards this 73 year old man that is me, just you look, he has a completely different attitude. Truly, he has altered his attitude, just now the smiling face that was turned on them is now becoming ferocious, ugly, mysterious and also cruel.

Merciful Buddha, I am afraid, I am so afraid that I am trembling It is so black, it is so silent!

Is death such a realm as this: or is it even more black, even more silent?

- the night of the 20th

They are all asleep, and they are sleeping very contentedly. They are to be admired. Death is giving them a wide berth, Death is only enticing me. They are fortunate, but they are absurd, they are truly absurd! Following the usual custom, they have made a coffin ready for me. Oh, a coffin! What a frightening oblong box that is, but on top of that it is for me. It is placed in the empty room next to mine, it is waiting for me to go to sleep Every day I read a few newspapers, and spend some time smoking, and in this way a day goes by, so that I have gone even a bit closer towards it, until eventually - how mysterious these two words are - then oh, merciful Buddha, then everything is over! One has disappeared, vanished, into a very black, very silent realm, whilst the living weep over the ashen, silent skeleton.

If I were dead, they would be sad, because they love me so much. How they would weep, if they could conceive of me lying here unconscious

When that time comes I will have nothing, no world, no universe, nothing at all, not even myself. But they will cry so bitterly, perhaps even to the point where they weep tears of blood Yet I will know nothing, I will have no sorrow: sorrow will be theirs. The living who care for the dead are the sorrowful ones, but the dead are merely empty.

In fact, Death is simply emptiness, Death lacks sorrow. Yet Death, oh, how I fear it, I fear it to the nth degree Why? I cannot explain.

Death is frightening, but I cannot explain why, several times I have done careful analysis of this way of thinking, pursuing the source of this terror, always without a result: I do not know the reason for it either. Death is frightening, Death is more frightening than anything else On a few occasions I read some sutras with the intention of ridding myself of this sort of terror. And by believing in Buddhism does it disappear? By reading sutras I certainly did not imagine that I would be able to avoid the distress of what is known as entering hell, and even less did I imagine that some Buddhist remedy would enable me to lengthen my life. In the sea of terror, in the boundless sea of terror, however, by using intuitive observation to obtain any old idol in the belief that it will act, that for the time being it will act as one's support, one will then be like those youngsters who plunge themselves into frenzied singing about pure love, even though their belief in love is no more than the attraction of sexuality.

In cases of extreme terror, the only thing to do is to count one's Buddhist beads: by reading sutras, one can hear this sound which is both faint and yet able to shatter the sorrow of the whole universe.

The night is shaken by this sound, but the Night still remains black.

- also recorded the same night

I rose early and they came to bid me good morning as usual, but this morning each of their faces wore an expression of mysterious silence, their faces were both tense and melancholy. Are they afraid, are they in terror? Without a doubt, they have felt a mysterious premonition, at the very least they have felt this. They are waiting in fear and trembling for the inauspicious day that is inevitable. On this day, one person will forget everything, lose everything,

whilst others will be sorrowing I am comforted, because they have always loved me. They love me. Is that not so? Yes it is so: because one can only think like this, because one can only have self-confidence in this way. Otherwise, otherwise how I would vacillate! It is no good thinking about it, about such problems as these.

They bid me good morning, they merely bid me good morning, they do not say anything else. But their faces speak volumes, they say: "It will soon be here, we are preparing for it!"

If there is such a thing as a soul, my soul is certainly being plucked out.

- the 23rd

After dinner, young Hezi, jumped up very happily. Her hand held up a steel wire cage in which a rodent was trapped. She shouted:

"A rat, a rat!"

In fact, there was a rat in the cage, a little rat, the fur on its body still had a fleshy red colour. It was trapped in this little world, and was thinking how it could scurry out of its little world. Its comical, panicky appearance made young Hezi laugh. This pitiful little pet, its single thread of life could have been broken by little Hezi, the thread was as fragile as that.

"Is it thinking of escaping, that it runs about so frantically?" Little Hezi's empty heart was full of questions like this. She had not thought, and she was not going to think that she held the power of life or death over this little creature.

"It naturally wants to escape", I said.

"Why does it want to escape?"

This is clearly because it fears death. But I did not say so, for what use would there be in saying this? I just hoped she would let it go. I hoped this little thing would live. I said that it had a mother waiting for it, so she should let it go so that it could go back to see its mother. "Its mother loves it just like your mother loves you." As a result of my saying this it lived: but I hope it will always go on living!

Hezi is still young, for otherwise she would have dissected the composition of her grandfather's heart at this time, because I too was in the process of analysing myself. My motive for telling her to let it go was a peculiar motive, and I cannot explain why I did it. I cannot imagine that I ever felt pity for it, I certainly did not pity it. I really do not understand how the death of an animal can win some people's compassion and sympathy! Yet I certainly did not love it: for it was detestable. So why was it then, why was it that I hoped it would live? I cannot explain. I just feel that all living things are capable of consoling me and cheering me up at the moment. I do not want to see them die. I love living things, no, I should say I love the life of living things.

- the same day

..... They are talking about me! Listen, it is certain that they are talking about me! The sound of their voices is so faint, but also very tense, and very mysterious. Their voices carry a tremor, their voices are so sharp, as though warning someone of imminent danger.

I am in my own room, so I cannot hear their words clearly. They are talking really faintly, I cannot make out one word, even though I am listening with all my concentration, and holding my breath

What can they be talking about? One can predict a little. The old fellow is senile, his hair has all turned white, and there are countless wrinkles on his wizened face, he does not show any interest in anything, he is simply waiting, waiting for the approach of death: how Death lures him! Death is shining on him, leaping about; Death is laughing at him Merciful Buddha, this is truly frightening! But why should they wish to talk about these things?

The noise of their talking has shattered the harmonious atmosphere, shaken my nerves and trammelled my soul.

It would be better to go and listen, listen to what they are saying. I ought to secretly approach them and listen. At this point I shifted my feet ever so softly But I stopped in my tracks as soon as I went out of the door of my room: I felt a kind of constriction. By going out of my room I was even closer to them, and the sound of their voices spread even more densely, while at the same time the air out there was even more tense, even more murky, even more mysterious, even more terrifying. Oh, I did not dare to go on, I did not dare to go on, I could only shrink back. If I went forward one step, my nerves would instantly snap, and my soul would start to tremble.

At this moment I heard one of the most frightening phrases in the world: "the first axe blow."

The words on either side of this snippet of conversation I completely failed to hear, there was only this one phrase "the first axe blow!"

Ah, the first axe blow, the first axe blow What words could be used to modify it, what sentence could be used to describe it completely? With a noun such as this, no matter what sort of frightening or terrifying adjective you might pick from the world's stock to describe it you still would not be able to find one that fitted it perfectly.

Merciful Buddha, this demonic "first axe blow".....

And yet did I believe in it, did I believe in the legend of the "first axe blow?"

When they made my coffin, it was Wu San who made the first cut with the axe, how marvellous it was. That he should have known as soon as the first axe blow came down what length of time would elapse before someone would be in the coffin: this really is too absurd for words! But I would still like to ask him: after how long will that coffin of mine have someone sleeping in it?

How laughable such traditions are, how preposterous! And yet, ah, Wu San's face has just appeared before my eyes, and his face is concealing so many mysteries! He knows the date when I shall die! I do not dare look at him, I do not dare look at him. I had better read a sutra.

- the 24th

I am not afraid of dying, for what is there to fear about dying?

- the 25th

Wu San came today. Wu San often comes, but I felt today that he was different from usual. His eyes told me that he had a secret, that he had a secret about life. His face was shrouding terror, and on his face he wore a courteous smile.

He has prescience, at the moment when he let the first axe-blow fall he had a peculiar, mysterious feeling, which was in fact information relayed to him by the spirits of death.

I certainly would like to ask him, I certainly would like to ask him.

But I know that these words are too unscientific: I cannot go so far as to believe in it It is very difficult to explain why I want to go and ask him. It is as though for the time being I am treating it as a fact, for the time being I believe in it, and I want to go and inquire about the date of my death.

As usual he called out to me upon his arrival, and then we began to talk. We talked about growing flowers, we discussed burning incense, and we talked about Buddhist monks. Having filled his pipe, he smoked. And still I did not manage to ask the question I wanted to ask because there was no suitable opportunity, and even if an opportunity had presented itself, how could I put my question into words? It was just that whilst talking about other matters with him, when I did not think about wanting to ask him, we talked very freely, but as soon as I thought of it, as soon as I thought of wanting to enquire about the news that the spirits of death had brought him, I immediately felt indescribably ill at ease, and a sort of numb feeling assaulted me.

A few times I built myself up to ask, but all my blood congealed, turned purple, and became frozen. There was not a single part of my body that was not trembling, and it felt as though the air on all sides was pressing on me making me smaller. I wanted to ask, but as soon as the words reached my mouth they were stifled Ah, I did not dare ask, no, I was not capable of asking.

In the end I did not ask, but even if I had asked there was no certainty that it would have revealed that sort of information.

- the 28th

The black night is so frightening! It is the wings of Death.

When the light is off, the blackness flows in.

Rising one moment, falling the next, in roll the waves of blackness In the room it is too nerve-racking: it smiles, it dances, it comes and strokes my head.

As a rule I do not like to use symbolical language, but on this occasion I really did hear a sound that was like the flapping of wings. Merciful Buddha, my whole body felt as though it had been sprayed with cold water.

- the night of 1st March

My teeth ache.

Looking in the mirror, I feel that I look even older than I did the past two days.

- the 4th

Starting in the morning feelings of insecurity and vexation rushed into my heart, bound my soul tightly, right up until the present moment, the present moment when the black night runs wild, when the empty silence leads Death in, and when the dogs do not make a sound. The facts that I had never previously noticed or imagined were all dancing mysteriously, they hinted to me of a kind of premonition of blackness, of the territory of blackness, this is to say, a kind of destruction, a kind of doom. Destruction, doom, what sort of words are these? Is it life's final resting place, to use a common expression? I dare not talk about, I dare not imagine a final resting place that is as sad as this, this place that belongs to the whole of humanity that belongs to all living things, is it such a place as this? If I die, my thoughts, no, not thoughts, I should rather say my heart, will go back where? I do not understand.

Do I fear death? No, I do not fear death, death is so ordinary, so calm an event. It is simply that I do not understand, do not myself understand, even though I am so clear at the moment, where I shall go back in the future.

From early morning I have been feeling uncomfortable, like the anxiety felt by a young woman when she meets a young man she does not know. At lunch I was startled and terrified because I had so little to eat; at the dinner table there was a tense atmosphere. Those who had lunch with me all behaved strangely: as though the inevitable danger which they were competing with one another to wait for, had come even nearer; either it would come within a day or two or within an hour or two. Their faces made me shudder, and at the same time I felt hatred towards them because they were not very affectionate; they did not understand someone who was about to die; their faces only showed terror and no concern; they were menacing me. How absurd they are!.....

And yet the one who carries out the attack for Death certainly does not have a choice, he simply waits quietly beside you biding his time. Their chances of dying are certainly not less than mine, even though I am a bit more inclined towards it than them. Ha, their chances of death are of the same order as mine, Death has his eye on them to the same degree. They are the same as I am.

Indeed, they are the same as me. This is a truth. How happy I felt when I discovered this truth!

There is something else that gives me satisfaction, it is that after lunch I myself mentioned the reduction in the amount of rice, laughing I said:

"You still say I am healthy, but today I only ate one bowl of rice. The quantity of rice that I eat is getting less by the day I am not alright."

Although I was laughing playfully when I said this, I knew that there was a tremor in my voice. If on occasions others produced frightened sounds like this, I would certainly look at them in surprise.

But as Xiao Cheng reminded me, I had eaten quite a few sweets before lunch, and thus even though I had not been able to eat my rice, all anxieties suddenly vanished, and I felt as happy as a convict who is rid of his cangue. Could she have told a lie in order to comfort her old father who was being enticed by Death? No, what she said was the truth, I knew this myself.

I do not fear death, I do not fear death, I am absolutely not afraid. I am jealous of those youngsters out of a feeling of envy, but are they not the elderly people of the future? - That thought makes me very happy.

At the same time they are adorable. They simply possess pure naivety. They have none of the misgivings associated with immersing oneself in the sea of fanaticism, of intoxication, and of joy. As a result of not imagining unlucky and terrifying things, this slapdash, rash, passionate way of feeling seems adorable.

I shall not write any more, I will have a sleep. After reading a sutra I will go to sleep. By sleeping it is possible to rid oneself completely of melancholy thoughts and one can achieve nirvana for oneself; it just requires that one should not dream.

If one dies at the same time as one is sleeping is that as bad as dying at the same time as one is asleep and dreaming. I do not know whether or not it is like this. If it is like this then I am not afraid of dying. And yet

Sleeping merely means lying down, in my case at least; because I cannot sleep. My family urge me to take "Veronal", saying that it is very efficacious; but it is anaesthetizing, and to go to sleep under an anaesthetic is absurd. I am afraid of it, I do not want to take it. By lying down on my back I quietly observe how the night manipulates me, manipulates me to what extent. Meanwhile I am listening for noises that come from the adjoining room, for a black box is placed in there, - something that belongs to me.

It is still alright, there is no sound of movement from the adjoining room Night has me in its grip

- by lamplight on the 7th

Dream Lasting Three and a Half Days

Dear Wei:

The train has now been stopped for an eternity at some bloody station whose name I don't know. (So I am taking this opportunity to write a few words to you.) Sitting alone on a train is even more boring than watching so-called 'romantic films'. The yellow faces around me and the few other faces that are other colours than yellow have combined to produce a really hateful atmosphere. The gentleman sitting opposite sometimes by heaving a very long sigh is able to make his breath most impolitely blow straight onto your face, and your nose that bears the brunt will get a whiff of a most excruciating smell. But if he is breathing with his mouth firmly closed, you can actually relax a little, for it is not as bad as being on the Beijing to Shenyang line where even if he breathed with his mouth shut there would still be the smell of garlic wafting over: to be sure this is something for which we have God to thank. Sitting diagonally opposite me, is a woman in her forties, with her hair in a bun hanging down her back who is smoking "Hademen" cigarettes and is making speeches in a loud voice to the man sitting next to her. Her voice drowns everything else, so that even the shouts of "Pickled tea eggs for sale" cannot compete with her. Her accent is, by God, a Hangzhou accent!

It will soon be two years since I left that Hangzhou accent behind me. Even though those two old folk of mine treat Hangzhou as their home town, and I practically grew up in Hangzhou, I have nonetheless always hated Hangzhou accents, in the same way as I retain a hatred for Hangzhou itself. Hangzhou really is detestable. I don't know what you think about the place, but I think you too ought to heap all your hatred on the place.

"I don't particularly feel that Hangzhou is disgusting", I remember you saying once. "Your hatred of Hangzhou is perhaps because your family live there".

I cannot tell whether what you said is correct or not. People always dislike their own home towns, and because of this even places where they 'inherit property' seem hateful

Thanks be to God, the train is moving: when travelling by train, the times when the train is stopped are even more boring than when the train is in motion.

I'll have to stop because the vibration makes it impossible to write any more. That woman from Hangzhou is, however, still talking loudly, it's just that the sound of her voice has been partially drowned by the noise of the engine.

Now we have reached K..... Damn, its really boring. I have even read all the advertisements in the journal I bought for the journey, even reading "Would all those readers who have read this far please reverentially recite the liturgy" I'm really sorry I did not bring a few books with me.

Since I set out I have smoked at least 20 cigarettes, and my confused thoughts have spread all over the place just like the smoke from my cigarettes. The lecturing of the woman from Hangzhou is never-ending; perhaps she plans to say today all that she has wanted to say throughout her life.

All the scenery is just as it was when I left Hangzhou: the weather is just as good, the sky is full of all sorts of different kinds of clouds; yellow leaves and shrivelled grass cover the ground as before. The vista looks like a well-patched coat; it is the same season, people's attitudes are the same, the only difference is that on one occasion I was coming away and on this occasion I am going back.

I think my feelings this time, must be very similar to yours that year when you went from Beijing back to Henan: one's head is completely filled with the images of those two pathetic old folk. It is just that you on that occasion were

full of sorrow, whereas I now feel empty, as if this visit to my old folks is merely a twist of fate, and is not intentional on my part, even though it was the day after I reached S that I made up my mind to take a trip to Hangzhou as I was so close.

I also feel a particular emotion; it is fear. My smoking, and getting drunk, and doing things that most other families would disapprove of (what these things are, you of course know), are things which my mother and father have already got wind of. And it is not that I am afraid of being told off, for short tempered though my father is, he is not capable of it, even to the extent that he does not dare to reprove me very much at all; he treats me as politely as he would a friend. On the one hand it is because I am grown up and have become unmanageable, while on the other hand it is because I always put up with him - tolerate him. As for my mother, she is a frail lamb, but behind my father's back, she is capable of appealing to me with her tears and sighs: old friend, this is what I am afraid of.

But fundamentally those two old folks of mine are sad cases. They put all their efforts into loving their son, they heap every kind of consideration and tenderness on him. In the meantime, they are struggling with suffering and poverty. As for their son, he is apparently completely ignorant of the fact that they are leading this kind of life. The year before last he came back from Beijing, only stayed for just over a month, and the way of life at home almost drove him crazy, so without mincing matters he found an excuse to go to X. My father was angry at heart, but did not vent his anger, and the day he was leaving for X, the old boy even accompanied him to the station. Mother may have cried, but he did not see her do so.

"He has grown wings so he wants to fly", the old girl would surely have said with a wry smile.

(Something I would not even have dreamed of at that time was that having reached X I would actually find a job and thus be in a position to help out the old folks financially).

On the one hand I detest my family, but I do at the same time feel that on humanitarian grounds I ought to arrange for them to live a little like human beings, without going so far as to say live comfortably. Take Mr. F - that man who once stole your seat in that little cafe in Xi Zhai - I do not agree with his kind of attitude. What need is there simply because they are one's parents to regard them as enemies? But to be like you and receive a pretty agitated letter, and then allow the deepest sorrow to get hold of you, and only manage to fight back tears because you are with a girl student; this is something that couldn't happen to me. I have never for any reason wept.

The train is moving

Jianqiao. About another ten minutes and then we will reach Hangzhou.

The woman from Hangzhou is yawning and stretching.

This is the end of this letter. "Please await the next instalment for an explanation".

20 October.

I had never seen before the house where my parents now live. On entering the door, I saw the unfamiliar furnishings of the rooms, and wondered if I had come to the wrong place.

I went in another two steps -

My father.

When I saw him, he was reading a novel.

"Dad!"

"Ah!" The old boy jumped up. Sadness, joy, vexation and pleasure; all sorts of emotions showed themselves in his face at one and the same time. He was clearly so moved that he could not say anything; he merely emitted a simple exclamation.

His beard was quite a bit greyer, but the wrinkles on his face were no more numerous. I smiled involuntarily. I felt a need to be apologetic.

Dad opened his arms and we embraced.

Whilst we embraced, he shouted to my mother: "Come and see who has arrived".

Mother of course was doing what she had grown accustomed to doing for almost the last ten years: because of back-ache, she could not sit down, and often had to lie down on her bed.

"I know who it is. And I've not even had time to put on my shoes".

After escaping from my father's hug, I went into my mother's room, where she was sitting on her bed. My father followed me in.

"You both look just as healthy, just as healthy. Dad's colour even looks a bit better."

"Really" said my father automatically, but with undisguised satisfaction all the same.

Actually, even though mother's grey hairs had not grown any whiter, her face looked very haggard.

The old girl looked me up and down weighing me up as though I was something new and strange. On her face was a joyful smile, but this apart, she did of course have another expression

on her face; I cannot say what that expression was, but if I was forced to say, then perhaps it was like the expression on the face of the defeated when they have suddenly been shown sympathy by the victor; possibly there is a similarity, but they are not all that similar.

"It seems as though you have grown a bit taller again", she said.

"Can I still be growing, when I am already in my twenties?"

"But he still hasn't grown out of his childlike temper," my father interrupted, "he still hugs and kisses".

When my mother heard this she smiled sweetly. I went in for hugging and kissing with them into my teens and my father had once said: "Will you still be as affectionate as this when you are grown up?" I was just the same even though I had now become 'an adult' and had 'grown wings'. I had become accustomed to these physical displays, and it was not that I was behaving unnaturally, and it was not that I thought I could console my poor old folks by behaving in this way, but simply that as soon as I saw them I embraced them without so much as thinking about it. They, however, got a lot of pleasure from this.

"Why didn't you drop us a line to let us know you were coming?" Dad asked.

"My arrival was very hastily arranged. Originally I came to S on a small matter of business; that was on Sunday. I finished my work yesterday and found I had some spare time, so I got on a train this morning."

Naturally there was no need to give a detailed explanation of what that little matter of business was.

"So you haven't eaten yet?"

"No, I haven't".

"What do you want to eat, noodles or rice?" Mum asked.

"We probably still have some rice left."

"In that case I'll have rice."

"What would you like to go with it?"

"So how many days leave did you ask for?" Dad asked again.

"Anything will do. Leave? Yes, I took a week off."

"So you can spend four days at home, including today."

"Mrs. Li, the young master hasn't eaten yet, boil up some water to heat the rice, peel a couple of pickled eggs, and buy some"

It was still that same old Mrs. Li, honest Mrs. Li who had not spoken a word out of turn all her life. It looked as though she too was pleased to see the return of the 'young master'.

Of the furniture, half the pieces were old friends; I felt as though the year or so that I had spent at X was just a dream.

After this we started to "gossip". X was a place where we had lived previously, so my father took a lot of interest in the events in X in recent years. We also talked about our relatives, fellow townsmen and friends in X; we talked of the weather and people in X; we talked about the house; we talked about Mrs. Li; we talked about; we talked about practically every little thing that we could think of. From the time I arrived to the moment I had finished eating, our conversation poured forth as quickly as we thought of things to say. Mother told me that the black cat had had three kittens, and that we had given two away to the Peng family. The previous

month the big black cat had disappeared and now there was only a little yellow cat left, the little daughter of the black cat. She also told me that when my aunt had been in Hangzhou, on one occasion when she was getting into a ricksha she missed her step and fell over; fortunately she didn't break anything. She also asked me how much the suit that I was wearing cost to make. Finally, my father said that a letter had come from Hunan saying that Seventh uncle would soon be celebrating his sixtieth birthday, and they hoped I could make a trip back there.

"Oh! I'm not very keen on Hunan," I said.

Every room in this house, having been arranged by my mother, was very clean and tidy, but this kind of adjective could not be applied to the box-room. Although the trunks had been arranged tidily, there were however numerous storage jars lying about on the floor; there were also some brandy bottles. All the other bottles were given to Mrs. Li, but my mother said that brandy bottles were particularly good, so it was decided to let them stand in their dozens beneath the trunk shelf.

"In any case it's the box room, so all sorts of things are stored higgledy-piggledy in here," my mother explained.

"Of course it doesn't matter," I said. "All the other rooms are laid out very nicely; if someone from X were to see it, they would think it a rich person's house And in the kitchen there are cured meats and fish hanging up."

"They were sent by Hong Bi. Hong Bi is ever so pitiful, last month she

I realized father was no longer in the room.

"Where's father?"

"I don't suppose he went out, did he? I don't know whether his hat is still in the house."

I talked longer with my mother. I wondered whether it was not almost as though I was being perfunctory with them: immediately after joining that bloody middle school in X, the faces of all my so called colleagues seemed hard to tolerate, but later on those faces that had earlier been hard to tolerate gradually became familiar to me, so that recently I had almost come to talk to them as equals. When I call it talking, I naturally mean acting in a perfunctory way, so I think perhaps now I involuntarily treat them in a perfunctory fashion. But this is irrelevant. No matter whether the children are sincere or playing up to them, as long as the parents are able to obtain something akin to solace, that's enough.

Mother suddenly asked me why I hadn't written. I said sometimes it was because I was really busy, and other times it was because I felt I had nothing to say.

"But if you write often, your folks can put their minds at rest", she remarked mildly. "Sometimes your father loses his temper and says that your not writing makes us worried to death. I tell him 'To be sure he hasn't met with any accident; if something was up, he would certainly have written'".

She just talked about letters, and did not mention money. If she had mentioned money I would perhaps have blushed. On average I sent money once every two or three months, each time the most I sent was 80 dollars. It never occurred to me to ask how they managed. In their letters to me they had never asked me for money. There had been a few occasions on which my father's letters had said: 'Your mother is suffering from neurasthenia; when she saw she was nearly out of housekeeping money she was in a state and got the runs.' Then I would raise some money and send it back.

This time, I took the bull by the horns and said: "And what about money? I have sent very little money. Was father angry about that too?"

"Not at all. It was just that when your aunt came to Hangzhou that time, she asked if you often sent money home. I said, he is earning his own living, if he doesn't use a little of it on himself, what pleasures would he have?"

I felt as though my conscience was guilty: my lifestyle is much better than theirs. But I tried making an explanation:

"At the school they never give out the salaries on time. Giving out 10 dollars one day and five the next makes it hard for people to budget, and any small change gets spent as soon as it comes into my hands, so there was nothing left to send. And I've had some clothes made as well."

"That's quite understandable," she said. "I was just afraid that if you saw that we needed money, and you could not lay your hands on any, you would be anxious on account of this, so I have never asked you for money."

"About how much money do you need to run the household each month?"

"If we skimp like mad, 50 dollars is enough."

"What about all the time I didn't send money?"

"It is still possible to borrow money. A few times people asked your father to write scrolls, and they would give ten dollars or so, but his money is always spent on buying books. This always"

My father came back.

He had been to the wineshop next door to buy wine, and had also bought some dishes to go with the wine. I thought I ought to pay for this wine and food, but -

"I've already paid for it," he smiled with pleasure.

"Ah!" I said trying to be polite.

"Giving him wine to drink again!" My mother though smiling was reproachful.

My father liked drinking, so there were no restrictions on me, just so long as I did not drink to excess. It was only cigarettes; the two old folk were both extremely upset if I smoked. When I got off the train I stuffed my two packets of cigarettes very deep in my vest pocket.

Giving up smoking was something I could not do, even though I was not addicted. In order to prevent them worrying, I had to make it look as though I had given up.

My father is quick-tempered, but he is also a kind-hearted man. Sometimes he acts in a childish way. My mother is patient in all things. She bottles up all her anger and frustration in her heart. They are both weak. When dissatisfied with his son, the old fellow will simply keep his anger to himself, but after a couple of seconds, he will immediately calm down again. The old girl would just weep softly. In a word, they are exceedingly pathetic.

To tell the truth, my family is quite interesting. When I am at home, the household gives the appearance of being very harmonious.

My friend, I have worked it out. On humanitarian grounds, I should console them. Their expectations are not at all great, their total demands, merely boil down to no more than the consolation that having a son can give them

It is already eleven o'clock, my father is urging me to go to sleep. I have had a tiring day, so I should have a rest true enough.

The night of the 21st.

Dear Wei:

The reason why man is considered to be the most intelligent of all living creatures, is simply because man is a kind of contradictory animal. In man's body there must certainly be a kind of nerve that has not yet been discovered by physiologists, which will become known as the contradictory nerve. The attitude of present-day men towards what is known as the family, is entirely motivated by the contradictory nerve.

If it was not for the fact that mothers and fathers love us too much, we would certainly be a lot more relaxed, and also completely free. At the moment, however, they make an emotional prison in which they incarcerate us. But I myself cannot be held in; at the most it is out of pity for them, that makes me rush to act in this perfunctory way for a while and that is all - I say act in a perfunctory way! Since at present our bodies have a part that is not our own, my friend, we still ought to carry out what we said: we ought to ransom our selves. We should pay a fair price to buy back our freedom. I am not really like you, "Oh! There is nothing that can be used to redeem emotions." But as for me, as long as they are carefree and comfortable, I can shed my so-called responsibility: they'd have less to worry about if they didn't have children than if they did, is what I say.

Everything in the family is petty, trivial and flavourless. When I have just arrived home, savouring these things produces a sort of strange sensation, which can neither be called beautiful nor horrible. It is something like suddenly changing flavours and eating almonds, pinenuts and like when you have been used to eating peanut brittle. But on the second day after arriving home, I then felt extraordinarily weary of these things.

People, in the end, it is people that are impossible to fathom.

The second day after reaching home, I invited them to go on a lake-trip, and yesterday I asked them to go for a walk round the Lingyin temple. This brought a bit of a victorious smile to their faces, which relieved me from utter remorse. As long as it was their son's money that was used, never mind how it was used, they would feel some consolation, and feel a certain amount of vanity as well: their son was humouring them as an adult would humour a child.

I have grown tired of jaunting around West Lake these past two days, it (one almost ought to say she) although beautiful, seems nonetheless petty.

I said: "West Lake is merely pretty, it cannot compare with the magnificence of X."

The old folks did not offer any comment about what I said; perhaps they knew that I was once again rejecting and detesting Hangzhou. Hangzhou is actually extremely superficial; when I go to such places as San yuan fang, it almost makes me choke. If I were to live a long time here I would certainly die. But there is still something to save me, tomorrow I must go back to X, as soon as I think of this I feel like a primary school child about to break up for winter holidays at the end of the exams, even though the superficiality of X is even greater than that of Hangzhou.

I will be leaving tomorrow; I feel that sort of 'je ne sais quoi' that people feel when they return to their place of birth, (I really cannot think what word to use for this 'je ne sais quoi'.) When it came to the last evening meal, I went next door and ordered a large bottle of what they call Huadiao wine and some food to go with it. Once more I thought it would be nice to return the money that my father had paid out for wine and food a couple of days earlier, so I secretly put a five dollar note on my mother's table.

"Is this five dollars on the table yours?" my mother asked my father.

"No, it isn't."

"Is it yours?" she asked me.

"Mine? Yes."

"Put it away."

I concurred, but still did not move.

The evening meal was a joyful meal. They forgot about everything, forgot about their past worries, forgot about tomorrow's parting, and there were just happy smiles and banter, which concealed the many sadnesses in their hearts.

After supper, my father and I told jokes to one another. During this, even if it was not a particularly funny joke, my mother would still laugh proudly.

These three and a half days have gone quickly. Tomorrow I will as normal take my empty heart back to X.

The clock has struck ten.

Tomorrow I must catch the early train, so I must go to sleep early tonight.

The night of the 23rd.

Dear Wei:

I'm back at X again!

Three and a half days. Those three and a half days were simply a dream: during my dream I hardly felt very happy,

and after waking from my dream I did not feel disconsolate. I have no feelings at all, my heart just feels empty like a dry well.

When I left that morning, I did not once look at my mother's face, as I was afraid she would start to cry.

My father said: "I'll see you to the station."

I dissuaded him.

"Don't forget this five dollars," my mother said.

"No, it's better if I leave it here."

"This is the payment of the hotel bill," my father said smiling.

"Money for a hotel bill?" - "A hotel? Call it a hotel if you like"

They saw me to the front door. They instructed me repeatedly to write more often.

"If you have nothing to say, a postcard will do. It will put our minds at rest," my mother said.

Father asked: "Will you make a stopover at S?"

"I don't think so."

"Won't you have to take the night train?"

"Don't go riding often, and if you do, don't gallop too fast," the old lady was saying. "Wu Sange fell from a horse and broke a bone, don't you recall?"

"I won't necessarily have to take the night train, I can catch the afternoon train." I went on to answer my mother's question: "Yes, I'll go riding less often."

"If you can't sleep at night," mother said, "you can drink a cup of cold water before bed. I've experimented with this method and it is very effective."

"I don't have any trouble sleeping, I have grown used to going to bed late, and in fact I go to sleep as soon as my head hits the pillow."

"In that case you ought to go to bed earlier, going to bed late is very harmful to your system."

I agreed with her advice, and slowly set off.

"Be sure to write often," my father instructed me once more.

"I know."

"Oh, yes," my mother suddenly remembered something, "if you are often constipated you can eat some fruit in the mornings. Taking laxatives saps your strength."

"I have never taken laxatives."

My mother had rested one hand on the wall to support herself. My father had tucked his hands into his sleeves.

Because I was listening to what they were saying I had turned round, but they still would not go in, so I had to walk backwards a few steps.

"Go in," I called.

"Until we meet again. Wishing you a safe journey!" My father was smiling.

Mother was nodding and smiling. Their smiles looked very forced.

I went to turn the corner.

As I turned the corner, I called out once again: "Go back in."

This time I really did turn the corner.

"Oh, heaven knows when this fledgling will come back again!" Such a sentence as this was of course forming in their minds, it was just that they did not let it pass their lips.

I hailed a ricksha. As I climbed in, I thought to myself, I wonder what they will be saying now that they have got back in the house. Perhaps my mother is repeating that sentence again: "I don't know why, but young people today don't think about home." They would certainly have a feeling of emptiness as though they had lost something: to be sure, they had never had a firm hold on their son!

Holding my small suitcase tightly, I squeezed my way onto the train. As soon as the train moved, Hangzhou receded behind me. I felt empty and my mind went blank again. I just looked fixedly through the carriage window at the unfolding fields, and silently observed each of the peculiar faces in the carriage. The cigarettes which I had hidden whilst in Hangzhou once more made clouds of white smoke that issued from my mouth.

When the train arrived in X, it made me mysteriously happy.

I do not know why, but as soon as I left home, my impression of those two pitiful old people faded to nothing in my mind. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, this had been a dream!

My contradictory nerve made my feelings towards my family

I have run out of paper, so I will not write any more. In any case, my friend, we must still struggle to ransom our selves. - This is my final word:

..... I wish that you may achieve ransom at the earliest opportunity!

APPENDIX E

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General Bibliography

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[This collection and reprinting of Zhang's works is intended to comprise ten volumes of which the first three volumes only have to date (12. 1985) appeared. Volumes 1-4 reprint short stories; Volumes 5-6 novels; Volumes 7-8 children's fiction; Volumes 9-10 works of literary criticism and other theoretical works.]

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