

MR MAYBE : FEI MING AS A PASTORAL FICTION WRITER

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## Abstract

This thesis deals with Fei Ming (the pen-name of Feng Wenbing, 1901-1967), a writer who was active mainly in the 1920s and 1930s and who has been disregarded since 1949 until only recently. Fei Ming's works include stories, essays and poems, and this thesis concentrates on his pastoral stories written between 1923 and 1932.

The aim of this thesis is threefold. First, it attempts to illuminate the individuality of Fei Ming's pastoral stories by analysing their thematic and stylistic characteristics. The second objective is to examine the influence of foreign modern pastoral stories and Chinese traditional pastoral works on Fei Ming. The third is to outline the changes in his pastoral fiction writing.

In so doing, I hope this thesis will invite a fresh look at this writer who is barely mentioned in China, Japan and the West, and has never been made the subject of a systematic critical study.

The thesis consists of seven chapters: Chapter One describes the literary life of Fei Ming.

Chapter Two introduces an outline of Fei Ming's creative writings.

Chapter Three discusses the thematic characteristics of his stories about the countryside in Southern China.

Chapter Four investigates the pastoral elements in his stories. The term, 'pastoral' is defined, and the argument on influences on Fei Ming's work is developed.

Chapter Five analyzes the stylistic characteristics of his pastoral stories.

Chapter Six explores the novel, *The Life of Mr Maybe*, which I define as 'mock-pastoral'.

Chapter Seven examines the serial published in 1947-1948, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" to see how Fei Ming's views of country life changed after 1932.

The conclusion discusses Fei Ming's influence on Chinese writers from the late 1920s onwards and sums up Fei Ming's achievements as a fiction writer.

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Responsibility for any errors in this thesis is mine alone.



一九三〇年三月二十二日  
廢名兄照像其三  
且行記

Fei Ming in 1930

From *Yuwen zazhi* 艺文杂志, Vol. 1, No. 5 (January 1943).

## Introduction

'Fei Ming? Who is he?' This is the most common response I have received in conversation with acquaintances studying subjects related to China. Those studying Chinese literature often asked me; 'Why Fei Ming?' These questions simply indicate how unfamiliar and disregarded Fei Ming still is.

Fei Ming (废名) is a pen-name of the writer, Feng Wenbing (冯文炳). Born in Huangmei (黄梅) in Hubei province in 1901, he began writing in 1922 when he was a student at Peking University, and was active in the 1920s and 1930s as a story-writer, poet and essayist. In the 1930s when he was a lecturer at the same university, Fei Ming shifted the weight of his writing from stories to essays and poems. From 1937 to 1945 during the War of Resistance, he took refuge in his hometown and, after the war, returned to Peking University to resume teaching. In 1952, Fei Ming was sent to Jilin University where he remained until his death at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1967. During his life time, he published three collections of short stories: *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove* (*Zhulin de gushi* 竹林的故事, 1925), *The Peach Orchard* (*Taoyuan* 桃园, 1928), and *Jujubes* (*Zao* 枣, 1931); two novels: *The Bridge* (*Qiao* 桥, 1932) and *The Life of Mr Maybe* (*Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan* 莫须有先生传, 1932); one selection of his stories, *Selected Stories of Fei Ming* (*Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan* 废名小说选, 1957); two collections of poems: *Waterside* (*Shuibian* 水边, 1944; co-authored with Shen Qiwu 沈启无) and *Invitation to Hermitism* (*Zhaoyinji* 招隐集, 1945); and two books of literary criticism: *On New Poetry* (*Tan xinshi* 谈新诗, 1944) and

*Talking with the Young about Lu Xun* (*Gen qingnian tan Lu Xun* 跟青年谈鲁迅, 1957). The other major work of his, not available in book form, is the serial, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" ("Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后), published in *Literature Magazine* (*Wenxue zazhi* 文学杂志) in 1947-1948.

As for the question 'why Fei Ming?', the first answer is rather personal. When I first read Fei Ming's stories in the *Compendium of New Chinese Literature* (*Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi* 中国新文学大系) in 1987, I was gripped by the peculiar lingering aftertaste in them which somehow reminded me of *haiku* poetry. The second reason is that in spite of the unusual quality to be found in his writing, there are hardly any analytical articles more than fifteen pages long on his works even in China, not to mention the West and Japan. The most immediate cause of this seems to be the influence of Chinese politics; being a non-revolutionary writer and the student of the traitor and collaborator with the Japanese, Zhou Zuoren (周作人, 1885-1967), Fei Ming had to be 'buried' beneath the main stage of the history of modern Chinese literature after the war.

Fei Ming is indeed worthy of attention. He was a pioneering writer of the new twentieth-century genre, Chinese pastoral fiction. His individualistic, uncompromising pursuit of aesthetic quality is crystallized in his overflowing lyricism. He elaborated an original style which blurred the boundaries between stories, essays and poems, and his style has, in fact, had a strong impact on a considerable number of modern Chinese writers. It is the intention of this thesis to re-evaluate his accomplishments without political bias.

As far as I am aware, this is the first attempt at a systematic discussion of some length of the stories of this still largely neglected writer. The analysis will concentrate on Fei Ming's 'pastoral' stories written between 1922 and 1932, in which genre and period his literary achievement seems most prominent. These ten years correspond to the beginning of his writing and the year of the publication of his two novels, after which he more or less gave up writing fiction. His poems, essays and literary criticism written during or after this period are also referred to when they are relevant to the arguments on his stories or useful in explaining Fei Ming's literary views and thoughts. "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", which is the only substantial story written after this period, is also discussed, since it unfolds vivid changes in Fei Ming's views on various aspects such as rural life and his previous pastoral writing.

The aim of this thesis is threefold. First, it attempts to illuminate the individuality of Fei Ming's pastoral stories by analysing their thematic and stylistic characteristics. The method used involves discussing the stories which best exemplify the arguments, instead of trying to mention every story by Fei Ming which belongs to the scope of this thesis. The second objective is to examine the influence of certain foreign modern pastoral stories, and to trace the heritage from the Chinese pastoral tradition. The third is to outline the changes in Fei Ming's pastoral fiction writing and to speculate on the reasons for them.

The thesis consists of seven chapters: Chapter One describes the literary life of Fei Ming and also provides background information

for the discussion on his stories in the forthcoming chapters. As no one has written on Fei Ming's life in English except for one short translation, and as materials in Chinese and Japanese are also scarce, I have consulted the most detailed academic account available so far, "Chronicle of Fei Ming" ("Fei Ming nianpu" 废名年谱) by Chen Zhenguo (陈振国) published in the *Bulletin of Cultural and Educational Materials* (*Wenjiao ziliao jianbao* 文教资料简报), No. 137 in 1983 when there were no means of obtaining information myself. However, where I have disagreed with Chen's chronicle, I have suggested alternatives based on my own analysis. I have also added new information gathered through reading articles related to Fei Ming, and my interviews and correspondence with Fei Ming's nephew, friends and colleagues.

Chapter Two provides an overview of Fei Ming's creative writings including his stories, essays and poems. Together with Chapter One, it introduces Fei Ming as a writer, but with emphasis on the trends of his actual writings rather than his literary activities.

Chapter Three discusses the thematic characteristics of his stories about the countryside in Southern China and his literary views when he wrote them. This analysis anticipates the idea of 'pastoral' which will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter Four investigates the pastoral elements in his stories. Firstly, the term 'pastoral' will be discussed and a working definition will be given, to be used in this thesis. Secondly, some foreign and Chinese influences on Fei Ming's stories will be examined. The chapter also offers a clue to the peculiar aftertaste which Fei Ming's pastoral stories leave behind.

Chapter Five examines the stylistic characteristics of his pastoral stories. To bring into relief their lyrical quality, it will focus mainly on plot-structure and the use of imagery.

Chapter Six will discuss the novel in which pastoral and satirical elements coexist, *The Life of Mr Maybe*. I shall describe it as a 'mock-pastoral' novel, explain its nature, and analyse Fei Ming's thoughts as expressed in it. As the novel is so unusual in structure and style, much space is spared for the illustration of its uniqueness.

Chapter Seven looks at the intensely autobiographical story "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" in comparison with *The Life of Mr Maybe* and his pastoral stories of the 1920s and 1930s.

In the conclusion, Fei Ming's influence on modern Chinese writers is discussed, in an attempt to locate Fei Ming's position in the history of Chinese modern literature from a wider and perhaps truer perspective than that currently allotted him.

Finally, a few words about the title of this thesis. "Mr Maybe" comes from Fei Ming's novel, *The Life of Mr Maybe*. Since "Mr Maybe" is a fictional character, it is of course dangerous to assume that he stands for "Fei Ming". However, considering the nature and content of the novel, the two are very close, as shall be discussed in Chapter Six. Besides, in "After Mr Maybe Flew in a Aeroplane", "Mr Maybe" is used as a synonym of "Fei Ming". Additionally, Fei Ming's works have often been known for their obscurity (among those who did or do know them) and are likely to make readers ponder. So I have linked Fei Ming and "Mr Maybe" with a colon.

## Note

As for the writer's name, the pseudonym, 'Fei Ming', is used consistently throughout this thesis, as it is the one he used most frequently for the publication of his 'creative' (as opposed to critical or academic) writings.

The names of Chinese writers, place names and titles of works are given in the Pinyin romanization, however, familiar anglicizations such as 'Peking' and the 'Yangtze' River are retained. When the Wade-Giles system is used for a Chinese word in a quotation from an English text, the Wade-Giles version has been replaced by Pinyin in parentheses. As for Japanese names, the surname has been put first, followed by the given name. (The only exception is the name of the writer of this thesis.)

## Chapter One

### Fei Ming's Literary Life

In the novel, *The Bridge* (*Qiao* 桥), the main character Xiaolin (小林) says:

The significance of life lies not in its story, but in the foregrounding of the story's style. As for the story, let it be one of destiny -- I mean, accidental circumstances.

人生的意义本来不在它的故事，在于渲染这故事的手法，故事让它就是一个『命运』好了，——我是说偶然的遭际。<sup>1</sup>

These words will turn out to be a suggestive summary of the real life of its author, Fei Ming.

This chapter will provide a literary biography of Fei Ming, concentrating on the period up to 1937 when his writing career was in its heyday. The period after 1937 will be summarized only briefly. As mentioned in the introduction, because materials on this issue are extremely scarce, the most detailed academic account on Fei Ming's life available so far, "Chronicle of Fei Ming" by Chen Zhenguo<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fei Ming, "Gushi" 故事, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932, rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 365-366.

<sup>2</sup>Chen Zhenguo 陈振国, "Fei Ming nianpu", *Wenjiao ziliao jianbao* 文教资料简报, No. 137, (May 1983), pp. 45-60. It consists of sixteen pages. In the course of writing this chapter, *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* 冯文炳研究资料, ed. Chen Zhenguo (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi chubanshe, 1990) was published. This includes Chen's "Chronicle of Fei Ming" ("Fei Ming nianpu"), rewritten as "Feng Wenbing wenxue huodong nianbiao" 冯文炳文学活动年表 (pp. 11-29). The revised version has also been consulted. However, the contents of the two versions by Chen are more or less the same.

During the final revision of this thesis in March 1993, the first published book on the life of Fei Ming became available, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming* 梦的真实与美 —— 废名 by Guo Jifang 郭济访 (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 1992). Guo's biography (which forms part of the "Chinese modern writer's biography series" 中国现代作家传记丛书) is rather unreliable; it is often semi-fictional: It contains numerous unverifiable details such as six year old Fei Ming's dialogue with his grandmother (pp. 5-6), and the dialogue between Fei Ming and Hu Shi (胡适 1891-1962) on their first meeting (p. 87). These

has been consulted when there were no other means of obtaining information. However, where I or others are at odds with Chen's chronicle, alternatives have been suggested and new information, gathered from articles relating to Fei Ming, and interviews and correspondence with Fei Ming's nephew, friends and colleagues, has been added.

### Childhood in Huangmei (1901-1915)

Fei Ming (废名 'Abandon Name')<sup>3</sup> was born on 9 November 1901 (that is, 29th day of the ninth month in the lunar calendar) the second son of a large and moderately wealthy family. The family lived in the South Gate Area (城南门) of Huangmei (黄梅) in the eastern part of Hubei province, just north of the Yangtze River near

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curious accounts are not supported by footnotes indicating precise sources of information. Guo also occasionally treats what Fei Ming wrote in the 1950s and 1960s uncritically. Also, Guo sometimes seems to take what is written in Fei Ming's stories of the 1920s and 1930s as totally autobiographical and describes them in great length (for example, the dialogue between Fei Ming and Zhou Zuoren at pp. 170-171 is an adaptation of that between the character, "I" 我 and Kuyu wen 苦雨翁 in Fei Ming's story, "Zao" 枣; the wording of some parts is exactly the same as that in Fei Ming's story.). Apart from these, there are many other parts in which very imaginative elements are mingled, and which contain either details unobtainable from Guo's own bibliography or highly emotional comments by Guo himself (eg. pp. 31-33, p. 35, p. 59, pp. 112-113, pp. 131-133, pp. 172-174, p. 178, pp. 181-183, pp. 185-189, p. 235, p. 237, pp. 282-283, pp. 286-293, p. 304, pp. 308-313, p. 357). Because of these, although Guo's book indeed provides an entertaining story about Fei Ming's life, it cannot be considered as a totally 'academic' work. Therefore, the book has only supplied a little information which had not been found in the already completed research and Chen's chronicle, and which was judged to be convincing. Where Guo's accounts clearly match the conclusions of this thesis, this has been mentioned and when information has been added from Guo's book, the source has been clearly stated in the footnotes.

<sup>3</sup>This pen-name, whose meaning is the opposite of the Confucian ideal of achieving 'gongming' (功名, scholarly name or official rank in feudal times), can be taken to symbolise Fei Ming's aspiration after the Daoist ideal when he decided to use it in 1926. On the traditional ideals of the Chinese intellectuals, 'gongming' and 'luchen' (陆沉, sink into land, or live in seclusion), see Takeuchi Minoru 竹内实, *Chūgoku no shisō -- dentō to gendai 中国の思想 -- 伝統と現代* (Tokyo: NHK books, first printing 1967, 20th rpt. 1989), pp. 39-114.

the border with Anhui and Jiangxi provinces. His family gave him the name Feng Wenbing (冯文炳), styled Yunzhong (蕴仲); he later used a number of pseudonyms, the most frequent being Fei Ming.<sup>4</sup>

Fei Ming's grandfather had been a craftsman, making furniture and other articles from bamboo. Two of his uncles ran a fabric store, and his father, Feng Chuci (冯楚祠) was a teacher who took the education of his children seriously.<sup>5</sup> Fei Ming's elder brother, Feng Lisheng (冯力生) attended a clan school (*sishu* 私塾) in Huangmei before entering Hubei First Normal School (湖北第一师范学校), and after graduating became a primary school teacher in Wuchang.<sup>6</sup> His younger brother, Feng Jingping (冯经平) also went to Hubei First Normal School, then worked as a school teacher in Hankou before dying from illness in his twenties. Of Fei Ming's sisters, the elder was married at an early age and the younger one died in childhood.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>His other pen-names include Bing Huo 炳火, Ding Wu 丁武 and Yun Shi 蕴是.

<sup>5</sup>Fei Ming's mother's full name remains unknown. Fei Ming's nephew, Feng Jiannan gives her surname as Yue (岳) and explains in his letter to me dated 17 August 1992: "In China, in the old days women (especially in the countryside) did not use their names and were usually just called Ms. so-and-so." (中国旧时妇女(特别是在农村)的名字是不用的,通常只称某(姓)氏。)

<sup>6</sup>According to Guo Jifang, Feng Lisheng later became a schoolmaster of Huangmei County Middle School (黄梅县中校长). See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 27. This seems to be based on Fei Ming's account in "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiliu zhang, Moxuyou xiansheng jiao yingyu" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后, 第十六章, 莫须有先生教英语, *Fei Ming xuanji* 废名选集 (Chengdu: Sichuan wenyi chubanshe, 1988), p. 700.

<sup>7</sup>According to Feng Jiannan's letter to me dated 17 August 1992. Fei Ming's elder sister's name remains unknown, but his younger sister's name was Lian (莲). Feng Jiannan also confirms that Fei Ming's early short story, "A mei" 阿妹 written on 18 December 1923, is about Fei Ming's own little sister, and that the characters and setting in the story are based on Fei Ming's own family. "A mei" was translated into English by Chi-chen Wang and was published in 1944. See Feng Wen-ping, "Little Sister", *Contemporary Chinese Stories*, trans. Chi-chen Wang (originally published by Columbia University Press in 1944, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), pp. 127-134.

Fei Ming's cousin<sup>8</sup>, Feng Wenhua (冯文华, 1902-1927), a well-known member of the Chinese Communist Party, was Chairman of Huangmei County Farmers' Association (黄梅县农民协会). He was killed by the Guomindang<sup>9</sup> on 27 June 1927. At the request of the Huangmei local government in 1964, Fei Ming wrote an article in which he commented that Feng Wenhua had been a Communist who had rebelled against his own middle-class background.<sup>10</sup> Another well-known relative of Fei Ming's is his nephew, Feng Jiannan (冯健男, 1922-), the son of Fei Ming's elder brother<sup>11</sup>, known for his literary criticism.<sup>12</sup>

In 1906, Fei Ming began to attend clan school, held at a temple, where he embarked on a traditional education reading *The Trimetrical Classic* (三字经), *The Hundred Surnames* (百家姓), and 'The Four Books' (四书), namely *The Great Learning* (大学), *The Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸), *The Analects* (论语) and *Mencius* (孟子). He studied here until entering Huangmei Bajiaoting Junior Normal School (黄梅县八角亭初级师范学校) in 1913.

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<sup>8</sup>According to Guo Jifang's *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 340, Feng Wenhua was Fei Ming's father's younger brother's son.

<sup>9</sup>Guomindang (国民党), the Chinese Nationalist Party.

<sup>10</sup>Fei Ming wrote: "The most vivid impression which Wenhua gave to people was the image of a Communist Party member rebelling against his own class." (文华留给人的印象最深的, 是一个共产党员背叛了自己出身的家庭的形象。) See "Feng Wenhua lieshi zhuanlüe" 冯文华烈士传略, *Feng Wenbing xuanji* 冯文炳选集 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1985), pp. 397-98. In Chapter Fifteen of his autobiographical story, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", Fei Ming wrote: "Mr Maybe's family was middle class ..." (莫须有先生之家是中产阶级...) See Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiwu zhang, Wuzusi" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后, 第十五章 五祖寺, *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 684.

<sup>11</sup>Interview with Feng Jiannan on 24 July 1988 in Shijiazhuang 石家庄.

<sup>12</sup>As for Feng Jiannan's career, see *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian, xiandai di yi fence* 中国文学家辞典, 现代第一分册, ed. Beijing yuyan xueyuan *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian bianweihui* 北京语言学院《中国文学家辞典》编委会 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1979), pp. 107-108.

Being the second son of a large provincial family, he did not receive the attention paid to the first born, and was somewhat neglected at home and at school.<sup>13</sup> Although he wrote in his essays that, in retrospect, he had generally been well-behaved as a child<sup>14</sup>, he also admitted a lack of self-respect, and occasionally stole money from home and went off to play cards with the streetsellers downtown, with whom he spent much of his time.<sup>15</sup>

The clan school he remembered as 'hell' (地獄) and a 'dark prison' (黑暗的監獄) where the teachers just gave the orders 'read!' and 'memorise'.<sup>16</sup> He wrote:

As a student, I was not particularly hard-working, yet I do not regret it. The education I received did me no good whatsoever, only harm. This is what I can clearly say to all educationalists... Only 'nature' did me any good. My house was in the town and my maternal grandparents' house was in the village two *li* away from the town, so before I was ten, just as Tao Yuanming's poem goes, 'On some fine morning I [would] walk alone,' my journey helped me produce literary works twenty years later. When I was in Beiping, a friend of mine married and everyone was asked to write something in momento in an album, so I wrote:

A little bridge outside the town, I walked along the sandy shore.

Now I still remember it just as if looking at a bridge in a picture.

I loved crossing the weir of the Gaodi River most.

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<sup>13</sup>Fei Ming, "Huangmei Chuji Zhongxue tongxuelu xu sanpian -- san" 黄梅初级中学同学录序三篇, 三, [first published in *Dagongbao* 《大公报》, Tianjin, (17 November 1946)], *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 386.

<sup>14</sup>Fei Ming, "Jiaoxun" 教训, *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 371.

<sup>15</sup>Fei Ming, "Huangmei Chuji Zhongxue tongxuelu xu sanpian -- san", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 386.

<sup>16</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di liu zhang, jiu shidai de jiaoyu" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后, 第六章, 旧时代的教育, *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 529.

With a one and a half *li* journey, I reached the Yuejia River-bend.

我做学生并不用功。然而我并不因此可惜。我所受的教育完全于我无好处，只有害处，这是我明明白白地可以告诉天下教育家的。... 只有“自然”对于我是好的，家在城市，外家在距城二里的乡村，十岁以前，乃合于陶渊明的“怀良辰以孤往”，而成就了二十年后的文学事业。在北平时有友人结婚，命诸人题一小册作纪念，我所写者为：

小桥城外走沙滩  
至今犹当画桥看  
最喜高底河过堰  
一里半路岳家湾<sup>17</sup>

According to Feng Jiannan, both the Gaodi River and the Yuejia River-bend are real place names and the Yuejia River-bend is where Fei Ming's maternal grandparents' house was.<sup>18</sup>

It is clear then that nature in Huangmei played an important part in Fei Ming's early life and in the development of his literary sensibilities.<sup>19</sup> Huangmei itself is surrounded by lush green scenery and water. The north-east region is mountainous and the south-west full of lakes and rivers. Many fields are cultivated between river

<sup>17</sup>Fei Ming, "Huangmei Chuji Zhongxue tongxuelu xu sanpian, san", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 386-387. *Li* is a Chinese unit of distance (=1/2 kilometre). Tao Yuanming's poem quoted here is "Guiqulai xi ci" (归去来兮辞 "The Return") and the translation is taken from James Robert Hightower, *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 270.

<sup>18</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Shuo Fei Ming de shengping" 说废名的生平, *Xin wenxue shiliao* 新文学史料, No. 2, 1984, p.107. According to Feng Jiannan's letter to me dated 17 August 1992, the Yuejia River-bend (=Yuejiawan) was also where Fei Ming's wife's parents lived (in other words, where his wife grew up).

<sup>19</sup>In his diary entry for 10 June 1926, Fei Ming wrote: "Went to Shichahai, crossed a small wooden bridge and remembered how happy I used to be to see a bridge in my childhood. If I noted down every single thing that I liked in my childhood one by one, that must be interesting." (到十刹海，过小木桥，想起儿时见了桥是怎样的欢喜。倘若把儿时所欢喜的事物一一追记下来，当是一件有趣的事。) See Fei Ming, "Wangjile de riji" 忘记了的日记, *Yu Si*, No. 128 (23 April 1927). Furthermore, in Chapter Eleven of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", Fei Ming writes: "Mr Maybe's rich emotions can be said to have been given him by fields" (莫须有先生丰富的感情可以说是田间给的). See Fei Ming, "'Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiyi zhang, yitian de shiqing" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后，第十一章，一天的事情, *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 616.

embankments and the hillsides. Taking advantage of abundant natural resources, many people in Huangmei engage in fishing and farming.<sup>20</sup>

Fei Ming mentions two relatives to whom he was close particularly in his childhood and who had a great influence on him. One is his maternal grandmother<sup>21</sup> whom he remembered in describing his journey to her house in the above quoted poem. The other is the wife of his father's younger brother.<sup>22</sup> This aunt is the model for the short story, "A Washerwoman" ("Huanyimu" 浣衣母) and her house is the setting of another short story, "A Willow Tree at the Riverside" ("Heshangliu" 河上柳).<sup>23</sup>

Soon after his sixth birthday<sup>24</sup>, Fei Ming became seriously ill. When he recovered, his maternal grandmother, his mother and his elder sister took him to Wuzu Temple (五祖寺) in Huangmei to pray for good fortune for him. Fei Ming remembers the occasion as an exciting experience.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Wuzu Temple appears to have been a favourite place of Fei Ming's throughout his life. He mentions the temple in his early short story, "My Neighbours" ("Wo de linshe" 我的

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<sup>20</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Shuo Fei Ming de shengping", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 2, 1984, p. 107. Also, Shi Ruilin 石瑞麟, "Huangmeixian lüezhi" 黄梅县略志, *Hubei wenxian jikan* 湖北文献季刊, No. 5 (October 1966), p. 68.

<sup>21</sup>Fei Ming, "Sanwen" 散文, *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 366 and "Wuzusi" 五祖寺, *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 302.

<sup>22</sup>Fei Ming, "Sanwen", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 366.

<sup>23</sup>Fei Ming, "Sanwen". "Heshangliu" and "Huanyimu" will be discussed in Chapter Three, below.

<sup>24</sup>The age is calculated according to the Chinese system, that is, the number of calendar years a person has lived.

<sup>25</sup>Fei Ming, "Wuzusi", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 361-365. Also, Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiwu zhang, Wuzusi", *Fei Ming xuanji*, pp. 682-684.

邻舍) and again in later essays.<sup>26</sup> The family also seems to have had fairly close contact with Wuzu and Sizu (四祖寺) Temples.<sup>27</sup> Fei Ming wrote that when he was a child, the grown-ups of the family would bring bamboo flutes and wooden fish from the two temples for the children.<sup>28</sup>

If this is so, then it is likely that the seeds of Fei Ming's later religious inclinations may have been sown in his childhood. The possibility is enhanced by Huangmei's historical connections with Chan (禪) Buddhism.<sup>29</sup> The fourth patriarch of Chan Buddhism, Dao Xin (道信, 580-651) lived on Mt Shuangfeng (双峰山) for thirty years and practised in Sizu Temple which stood about 17 *li* north-west of Huangmei. The fifth patriarch, Hong Ren (弘忍, 601-674) who formulated the rites and rules of the sect and made Chan Buddhism popular throughout China, came from Huangmei and built Wuzu Temple about 25 *li* north-east of the city gate. The sixth patriarch, Hui Neng (慧能, 638-713) received Hong Ren's mantle and alms bowl in the Dongjian Temple (东渐寺), 1 *li* south-east of Huangmei's city gate.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid. "Wo de linshe" will be discussed in Chapter Three, below.

<sup>27</sup>According to Guo Jifang's *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p.11 and p. 26, Fei Ming's father, who was a "gentleman" (绅士) of Huangmei County, used to be invited to attend ordinations at Wuzu Temple. Fei Ming also mentions this in "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiwu zhang, Wuzusi", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 681.

<sup>28</sup>Fei Ming, "Wuzusi", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 361.

<sup>29</sup>The critic, Yang Yi 杨义 attributes Fei Ming's description of the harmony between man and nature and old-fashioned family in *The Bridge (Qiao 桥)* to the influence of Fei Ming's roots in Huangmei, with its Chan connection. See Yang Yi, "Ershi shiji huaren jiating xiaoshuo de moshi yu bianqian" 二十世纪华人家庭小说的模式与变迁, *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中国社会科学, No. 1, 1990, p. 180.

<sup>30</sup>*Zhongguo fengwuzhi congshu: Hubei fengwuzhi* 中国风物志丛书: 湖北风物志, ed. Hubei renmin chubanshe (Hubei: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1985), pp. 99-109, and *Chūgoku bukkuyōshi jiten* 中国仏教史辞典, ed. Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄,

## Adolescence in Wuchang (1916-1921)

Fei Ming's father had wished for his son to become a merchant.<sup>31</sup> However, after graduating from junior normal school in 1916, Fei Ming left for Wuchang, and in 1917 entered Hubei First Normal School.<sup>32</sup>

There, he came across China's New Literature<sup>33</sup> for the first time, when in 1917 or 1918 a new teacher from Peking introduced the class to the poem "The Butterflies" ("Hudie" 蝴蝶)<sup>34</sup>, by the leading promoter of the use of the vernacular and 'the father of modern

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(Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1981), pp. 25-26, p. 105, and pp. 279-281. Hui Neng led the Southern School which stressed sudden enlightenment of mind (顿悟) while Hong Ren's other outstanding disciple, Shen Xiu (神秀, 605?-706) led the Northern School which stressed gradual enlightenment (渐修). The Southern School eventually overshadowed the Northern School and (according to Wing-tsit Chan) "from the ninth century onward, the story of Zen has been that of the Southern School". For more details, see Wing-tsit Chan, "The Zen (Ch'an) School of Sudden Enlightenment", *A Source Book In Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 425-430. According to Tu Wei-ming, for half a century (620-674), Huangmei became the undisputed centre of Chan Buddhism with a community that once numbered seven hundred resident monks. He also writes that since the district was strategically located near the Yangtze, the *dharma* expounded was easily transmitted to other parts of the country. See Tu Wei-ming, "Ch'an in China: A Reflective Interpretation", *Zen in China, Japan and East Asian Art: Papers of the International Symposium on Zen, Zurich University, 16-18. 11. 1982*, ed. H. Brinker, R. P. Kramers, and C. Ouweland (Berne, Frankfurt am Main, New York: Peter Lang, 1985), pp. 12-13.

<sup>31</sup>According to Chen Zhenguo, Fei Ming's elder brother helped him continue studying in Wuchang. See Chen Zhenguo, "Feng Wenbing wenxue huodong nianbiao", *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao*, p. 12. Guo Jifang states that it was Fei Ming's grandfather who wished Fei Ming to become a merchant, and that his father followed the grandfather's opinion. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>32</sup>Although Fei Ming was studying in Wuchang against his family's wishes, he was in touch with home and returned there during the school holidays. See Fei Ming, "Sanwen", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 369.

<sup>33</sup>The vernacular literature which arose as the result of the Literary Revolution (文学革命) of 1917 led by Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu (陈独秀, 1879-1942). See Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (first published 1960; Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1967), pp. 269-288.

<sup>34</sup>"Hudie" was written on 23 August 1916.

Chinese poetry<sup>35</sup>, Hu Shi (胡适, 1891-1962). The teacher criticised the poem, praising instead Chinese classical literature.<sup>36</sup> Fei Ming was not greatly impressed with the poem and found himself more attracted to works introduced as examples of the best classical literature such as the *ci*<sup>37</sup> poem, "The Immortal by the River" ("Linjiangxian" 临江仙) by the Song poet, Yan Jidao (晏几道, 1030-1106), and the *sanqu*<sup>38</sup> verse, "Autumn Thoughts" ("Qiusi" 秋思) by the Yuan dramatist, Ma Zhiyuan (马致远, ?-1321). Fei Ming was

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<sup>35</sup>Julia C. Lin's words in her book, *Modern Chinese Poetry: An Introduction* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1972; Washington Paperback edition, 1973), p. 31.

<sup>36</sup>I disagree with Chen Zhengguo's comment concerning this period that "there were considerable heated debates on the new and old ideological trends and literature at Fei Ming's school." (新旧思潮, 新旧文学的斗争在学校里十分激烈。) See Chen Zhengguo, "Feng Wenbing wenxue huodong nianbiao", *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao*, p. 12. Chen's statement does not match Fei Ming's own account of this time that he, like his other classmates, knew nothing about the rise of Chinese New Literature. Fei Ming writes in *Tan xinshi* 谈新诗, (first published 1944; rpt. Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1984, p. 3): "One day, a new teacher of Chinese came to us. We only knew that he came back after graduating from Peking University and that he was a disciple of Huang Jigang. We did not know anything more than that. As for what was called New Literature and what was called Old Literature, or such a fact that by that time at Peking University there had already appeared New Literature, we never knew..." ("有一天我们新来了一位国文教师, 我们只知道他是从北京大学毕业回来的, 又知道他是黄季刚的弟子, 别的什么都不知道, 至于什么叫做新文学什么叫做旧文学, 那时北京大学已经有了新文学这么一回事, 更是不知道了...") From this, it is clear that Fei Ming's teacher was a supporter of the famous scholar of *pianwen* (骈文 Chinese classical prose in euphuistically antithetical and ornate style), Huang Jigang (黄季刚, 1886-1935) who would later resign from Peking University to protest the policies advocated by the movement's leaders, Chen Duxiu and Hu Shi, during the May Fourth Movement of 1919, and go to Wuchang to teach. See *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China, Volume II: Dalai - Ma*, ed. Howard L. Boorman (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 197-198, and Chow Tse-tung, *The May Fourth Movement*, p. 270, and pp. 279-283. Guo Jifang also seems to believe that Fei Ming came to know about the Chinese New literature when his teacher discussed Hu Shi's poem in class. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>37</sup>*Ci* 词 is poetry written to certain tunes with strict tonal patterns and rhyme schemes, in fixed numbers of lines and words, originating in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and fully developed in the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

<sup>38</sup>*Sanqu* 散曲 is a type of verse popular in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, with tonal patterns modelled on tunes drawn from folk music.

particularly fond of "Autumn Thoughts" and would sing it to himself from time to time. In Hubei, far from the centre of the Literary Revolution, Fei Ming did not feel the thrust of the new literature, but was intrigued by the innovator, Hu Shi.<sup>39</sup>

Fei Ming was still in Wuchang in 1919 at the time of the May Fourth Movement. He was influenced by this patriotic cultural and political upsurge, and by the ideological 'New Culture' trend, as were many others who later became writers, and often read progressive magazines such as the influential *New Youth* (*Xinqingnian* 新青年). In particular, in February 1919, he read the poem, "A Small River" ("Xiaohe" 小河) by the writer, Zhou Zuoren (周作人, 1885-1967), Lu Xun's (鲁迅, 1881-1936) younger brother, and found it was something entirely new.<sup>40</sup> Fei Ming perhaps found novelty in the style of Zhou's poem which was freer and more 'prosaic' than that of earlier New poems such as Hu Shi's.<sup>41</sup> It seems that "A Small River" was a momentous and personally resonant piece of Chinese New

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<sup>39</sup>Fei Ming, "Di yi zhang, *Changshiji*" 第一章《尝试集》, *Tan xinshi*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>40</sup>Fei Ming, "Di ba zhang, 'Xiaohe' ji qita" 第八章《小河》及其他, *Tan xinshi*, pp. 82-84.

<sup>41</sup>In *Tan xinshi*, p. 84, Fei Ming wrote: "The youth read Mr Zhou's New poems and could not but forget about the bandages for binding girls' feet. There were 'natural-footed girls' on the spot and they wanted to try their hands at the medium." (青年们看了周先生所写的新诗, 大家不知不觉的忘了裹脚布, 立地便是天足的女孩子们想试试手段了。) This alludes to Hu Shi's candid description of his own early New poems (including "The Butterflies") as 'the suddenly freed bound feet of an old-fashioned Chinese woman' in his preface to the fourth edition of the collection of his poems, *Experiments* (*Changshiji* 尝试集). In *Modern Chinese Poetry* (pp. 37-38), Julia C. Lin points out that vestiges of the past such as fixed rhyming and regular verse length are still apparent in Hu Shi's early New poems. Comparing, indirectly, Zhou Zuoren's New poems with Hu Shi's, Fei Ming also wrote in *Tan xinshi*, p. 82: "Mr Hu Shi's metaphor of bound feet had already decided the fate [of his poems]: bound-footed women are bound-footed women after all and no matter how hard they try to release their feet, they can never become as natural as natural-footed women." (胡适之先生缠足的比喻已经注定了命运, 缠足的妇人就是缠足的妇人, 虽然努力放脚, 与天足的女子总不是一个自然了。)

Literature for Fei Ming; later, in 1923, in his early short story, "Long Days" ("Changri" 长日) he would describe a scene where the main character reads it to ease his vexed frame of mind.<sup>42</sup> Zhou Zuoren would become his life time teacher and friend.

Fei Ming's interest and potential in Chinese New literature were developing at the time. As a sensitive adolescent, his taste for pastoral themes, which would blossom a few years later in his stories set in the countryside, seems to have already been in bud. Fei Ming later stated that he was impressed by and enjoyed reading New poems by Liu Bannong (刘半农, 1889-1934) such as "A Shepherd's Sorrow" ("Muyang'er de bei'ai" 牧羊儿的悲哀)<sup>43</sup>, "A Small Peasant Family's Evening" ("Yige xiao nongjia de mu" 一个小农家的暮)<sup>44</sup> and "Paddy Awning" ("Daopeng" 稻棚)<sup>45</sup> when they were first published in *New Youth* in 1920 and 1921.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>"Changri" was written on 1 October 1922 and published in *Nuli zhoubao* 努力周报, No. 26 (29 October 1922). This story will be discussed in this chapter below.

<sup>43</sup>"Muyang'er de bei'ai" was written on 7 June 1920 and first published in *Xinqingnian*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (October 1920).

<sup>44</sup>"Yige xiao nongjia de mu" was written on 7 February 1921 and first published in *Xinqingnian*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (August 1921).

<sup>45</sup>"Daopeng" was written on 8 February 1921 and first published in *Xinqingnian*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (August 1921).

<sup>46</sup>Fei Ming wrote: "I liked this poem, 'A Shepherd's Sorrow', and the following poems I selected: 'A Small Peasant Family's Evening' and 'Paddy Awning', when I read them in the later editions of *New Youth*. They still give the same impression now. If I hadn't read the *Flourishing the Whip Collection* today, I would probably only remember these three New poems by Liu Bannong." (这首《牧羊儿的悲哀》与下面所选的《一个小农家的暮》,《稻棚》,在晚期的《新青年》杂志上发表时,我读之觉得喜欢,到现在还有着印象。刘半农的新诗,如果我今天不读《扬鞭集》,好象就只记得三首。) See Feng Wenbing, *Tan xinshi*, p. 59. The *Flourishing the Whip Collection* (*Yangbianji* 扬鞭集) is a collection of Liu Bannong's poems, published in Peking in 1926.

After he graduated from Hubei First Normal School and became a primary school teacher in Wuchang, in November 1921<sup>47</sup> he began corresponding with Zhou Zuoren, who had been teaching at Peking University since 1919.<sup>48</sup>

### Student days in Peking (1922-1929)

In September 1922, Fei Ming began the preparatory course of Peking University and was living in Shatan (沙滩) near the university.

Zhou Zuoren had met him and later wrote that Fei Ming had a rather peculiar appearance with a prominent brow and many scars on his neck from scrofula, and that he spoke in a low and husky voice.<sup>49</sup>

Now a university student, Fei Ming felt as though he had become a 'true primary school pupil' who could study freely.<sup>50</sup> The first foreign book he read was George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* which

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<sup>47</sup>Qian Liqun 钱理群, *Zhou Zuoren zhuan* 周作人传 (Beijing: Beijing shiyue wenyi chubanshe, 1990), p. 357. According to Zhou Zuoren's diary ("Zhou Zuoren riji" 周作人日记), Zhou received Fei Ming's first letter from Wuchang on 10 November 1921. Zhou also received letters from Fei Ming on 16 December 1921, 7 March 1922, 25 May 1922, 13 July 1922, and 9 September 1922 quite possibly before they met each other. See "Zhou Zuoren riji", *Lu Xun yanjiu ziliao* 鲁迅研究资料, No. 18 (October 1987), pp. 19-118.

<sup>48</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Huai Fei Ming" 怀废名, *Yao Tang zawen* 药堂杂文, (Beijing: Xinmin yinshuguan, 1944, rpt. 1945), pp. 115-116. By this time, Fei Ming was married to Yue Ruiren 岳瑞仁 who was also from Huangmei. According to Feng Jiannan's letter to me dated 17 August 1992, Fei Ming and his wife were cousins (more precisely, Fei Ming's mother and his wife's father were sister and brother.) The date of their marriage remains unknown. Fei Ming once described Mr Maybe's wife as 'very rich in local sensitivity' (她这个人总是富有地方色彩) in "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di jiu zhang Tingqian kanhui" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后, 第九章 停前看会, *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 581. According to Guo Jifang, Fei Ming's wife was one year older than Fei Ming and a good housekeeper although she did not know how to read very well. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 233.

<sup>49</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Huai Fei Ming", *Yao Tang zawen*, p. 116.

<sup>50</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di liu zhang, jiu shidai de jiaoyu", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 528.

inspired him to think he could become a writer.<sup>51</sup> During his time as a university student, he read works by William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), Fedor Solocub (1863-1927)<sup>52</sup>, *Don Quixote* by Cervantes (1547-1616) and poems by Li Shangyin (李商隐, 812-858). He also began studying poems by Du Fu (杜甫, 712-770) and later studied *The Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 诗经), *The Analects*, *Laozi* (老子) and *Zhuangzi* (庄子). He came to read Buddhist sutras as well.<sup>53</sup> Many of these works had some influence on Fei Ming's work, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

October 1922 saw the first publication of Fei Ming's poems and stories in *The Endeavour Weekly* (*Nuli zhoubao* 努力周报) under his real name, Feng Wenbing. This publication of his works was probably facilitated by his introduction through Zhou Zuoren to the editor of the magazine, Hu Shi.<sup>54</sup> *The Endeavour Weekly* became the main magazine to which Fei Ming contributed until it ceased publication in October 1923.

Fei Ming's earliest short stories published in *The Endeavour Weekly*, such as "Long Days" which I mentioned earlier<sup>55</sup>, "Elaborate Envelopes" ("Jiangjiu de xinfeng" 讲究的信封)<sup>56</sup> and "The

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid. Also, Feng Jiannan, "Shuo Fei Ming de shengping", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 2, 1984, p. 369.

<sup>52</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Nahan" 『呐喊』, *Chenbao fujian* 晨报副刊, No. 81 (13 April 1924).

<sup>53</sup>Zhao Cong 赵聪, "Feng Wenbing", *Xiandai Zhongguo zuojia liezhuan* 现代中国作家列传 (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongguo bihui, 1975), p. 122.

<sup>54</sup>Feng Zhi's 冯至 letter to me dated 18 January 1989.

<sup>55</sup>See p. 25 of this chapter.

<sup>56</sup>"Elaborate Envelopes" was written on 27 January 1923 and first published in *Nuli zhoubao*, No. 44 (18 March 1923). It was first collected in *Zhulin de gushi*.

Disappearance of the Young Man Ruan Ren" ("Shaonian Ruan Ren de shizong" 少年阮仁的失踪)<sup>57</sup> are set in Peking and describe a young provincial man's life as a student there.<sup>58</sup> Another early short story, "My Heart" ("Wo de xin" 我的心)<sup>59</sup> describes the journey to Peking of a young man from a large Southern country family.<sup>60</sup> These stories seem to reflect the young author's loneliness at living alone in a

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<sup>57</sup>"Shaonian Ruan Ren de shizong" was written on 10 May 1923 and first published in *Nuli zhoubao*, No. 65 (12 August 1923). It was first collected in *Zhulin de gushi*.

<sup>58</sup>Fei Ming's short story, "Ji youren J. T" 寄友人 J. T., which was written on 17 September 1923 and published in *Qiancao* 浅草, Vol. 1, No. 3 (December 1923), also has a similar theme to these stories. In "Ji youren, J. T.", the first-person narrator's infant name is 'Yan' 焱. The name 'Yan' is used in several short stories by Fei Ming, and will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three, below.

<sup>59</sup>"Wo de xin" was written on 24 March 1923 and published in *Nuli zhoubao*, No. 46 (1 April 1923). The story has strong autobiographical elements: for example, the location of the setting, the first-person narrator is called 'Er ye' (二爷, second son) by his mother, and his nephew's name is Jian'er 健儿 (which matches Fei Ming's real nephew, Feng Jiannan). The narrator's infant name is, again, Yan (焱).

<sup>60</sup>Fei Ming's earliest fiction discovered so far (by me) is "A Letter" ("Yi feng xin" 一封信), written under the pen-name, Yun Shi 蕴是 and published in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* 小说月报, Vol. 14, No. 1 (10 January 1923). It is in an epistolary form and concerns a young man's mixed feeling before and after leaving his hometown to study in Peking. So far, nobody else has ever pointed out the existence of this short story by Fei Ming. I venture to identify its author, Yun Shi, as Fei Ming from several stylistic characteristics of the story: for example, the geographical setting, the characterization of family members, the personal tone of writing, the epistolary style (Fei Ming wrote two other early short stories in this style.) and the fact that Fei Ming, who was himself styled Yunzhong, used the name, "Yun Shi" in another epistolary story, "Shaonian Ruan Ren de shizong". Feng Jiannan agreed with my view that "A Letter" is probably the earliest (published) story by Fei Ming. Feng Jiannan wrote in his letter to me dated 17 August 1992: "It is very likely that 'A Letter' is the first story by Fei Ming. It was written soon after he left his hometown for Peking. It is about the events that happened just before he left his hometown." (《一封信》很可能是废名写的第一篇小说。是他离乡到北京后不久写的。写的是他离乡前不久的事情。)

Supposing that the story is autobiographical as Fei Ming's nephew suggests, the first-person narrator, Sang Wo's (丧我 "Losing Myself") following description of his life under financial pressure soon after his arrival in Peking is interesting: "Today, I saw myself in a mirror and felt that I had become very sallow and emaciated! I began to cry: I couldn't understand my father and elder brother's feelings. I originally sought spiritual happiness, but now I add more vexation!" (今天偶然把镜子一照, 觉得黄瘦好些! 我便哭起来了, 我不能体贴我父亲, 我哥哥的心了。我本来是求精神上的愉快, 现在却添上一层烦恼!)

strange city and his dismay as he tried to adapt to life in a more materialistic society. There was also the dilemma of his disillusionment with some decadent aspects of city life and his dedicated family's high expectations of him. Although these stories are rather immature, both thematically and technically, with many diffuse, flat, clumsy descriptions, and they might well be termed 'practice pieces', the expression of young Fei Ming's solitude and love for his family in the countryside can still be observed.<sup>61</sup>

Besides Zhou Zuoren, Hu Shi also seems to have been an important figure to Fei Ming as he started to develop his literary career, especially at the beginning.<sup>62</sup> He discovered Kang Baiqing's (康白情, 1896-1945) collection of New poems, *Grass* (*Cao'er* 草儿)<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>For example, he seems to insinuate such feelings using a vivid contrast in the narrator's description in "Jiangjiu de xinfeng": "For a time, the grey-haired parents or sincere, wise, beloved wife would come to the mind of the son or husband who had no company except a lamp in a small, low dormitory room in the desolate city this dark night." (一时间, 花白头发的双亲, 纯和而又聪明的爱妻, 都来到这黑夜凄凉城中一间矮少的宿舍除掉灯光没有伴侣的儿子, 丈夫的脑里。) See *Zhulin de gushi* (Beijing: Beixin shuju, 1925), pp. 4-5.

<sup>62</sup>For instance, in 1924, Fei Ming sent a letter and a short story to Hu Shi. See *Hu Shi lai wang shu xin xuan, shang ce* 胡适来往书信选, 上册, ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo Zhonghua minguo shi yanjiushi 中国社会科学院近代史研究所中华民国史研究室 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), pp. 292-293. According to Feng Jiannan, Hu Shi was also Fei Ming's teacher at Peking University and Fei Ming was close to Hu Shi at the very beginning of his literary career. Gradually, however, Fei Ming became less close to Hu Shi and closer to Zhou Zuoren. See Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming yu Hu Shi" 废名与胡适, *Xin wenxue shiliao*, 1991, No. 2, pp. 136-138. Guo Jifang also stresses the important role Hu Shi played in Fei Ming's early literary career in *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 86-91 and p. 150.

<sup>63</sup>*Cao'er* was published in March 1922. Julia C. Lin comments on Kang Baiqing's poems: "[Kang Baiqing] was among the first to reintroduce the old popular subject of travel in a thoroughly unconventional way ... The world of modern Chinese poetry, like that of its Western counterpart, has been predominantly governed by a metropolitan consciousness. [Kang's] poems of rural scenes with their personae of simple country folk offer the reader a refreshing change. His lyrical and realistic repossession of the rural world is simple, direct, and often baldly folksy." See Lin, *Modern Chinese Poetry: An Introduction*, p. 43 and p. 45.

while reading Hu Shi's review of it<sup>64</sup> published in the supplement of *The Endeavour Weekly, Reading Magazine* (*Dushu zazhi* 读书杂志). Fei Ming later commented on Kang's poems:

I felt these poems to be fresh and crisp and they have left me with a very good impression ever since. Like reading someone's travel notes, it tempted me to go and see the beautiful scenery of mountains and water myself ...  
觉得那些诗真是新鲜爽利，一直留着一个很好的记忆。这很象读了人家的游记，惹得自己也想去看看这一幅佳山水 ...<sup>65</sup>

It seems that by the end of 1922, Fei Ming was becoming familiar with the Chinese New poems in which rural life is described positively, such as those by Liu Bannong and Kang Baiqing.

Fei Ming started publishing his pastoral stories in April 1923, which corresponded to the period of the ebbing of the May Fourth New Cultural Movement. Since the May Fourth Movement, the entire cultural heritage of China had been radically and totalistically attacked and rejected by the new intellectuals. After the New Cultural Movement reached a turning point around 1921<sup>66</sup>, Zhou

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<sup>64</sup>"Ping xinshiji, *Cao'er*" 评新诗集《草儿》，*Dushu zazhi* 读书杂志, No. 1 (September 1922). In "Ping xinshiji (yi) Kang Baiqing de *Cao'er*" 评新诗集 (一) 康白情的草儿，Hu Shi wrote in 30 August 1922, "The greatest contribution of Baiqing's *Grass* to Chinese literary history lies in his travel poems." (白情的草儿在中国文学史的最大的贡献，在于他的纪游诗。) See *Hu Shi wencun erji, juan si* 胡适文存二集，卷四 (Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan, 1924, third printing 1925), p. 274.

<sup>65</sup>Fei Ming, "Jiu, *Cao'er*" 九《草儿》，*Tan xinshi*, p. 93.

<sup>66</sup>After this, the leading members of the movement and main contributors to *New Youth*, Chen Duxiu and Hu Shi moved apart ideologically (Chen plunged into Marxist politics and Hu Shi withdrew himself from the magazine), and the magazine's activities as the promoter of New Culture became less powerful. In his manuscript to be published as a book by Oxford University Press, "The Uneasy Narrator -- Chinese Fiction From the Traditional To the Modern" (p. 48), Henry Y. H. Zhao also marks the year 1921 as one of the turning points of the May Fourth Literature. He divides the whole period of May Fourth Literature into three phases: the "Preparatory Phase" (1917-1921) when "there was more discussion than creative writing"; the "Pluralistic Phase" (1921-1925) when many coteries and schools emerged and diverged, though still

Zuoren, one of the forerunners of May Fourth New Literature, began to publish articles which promoted the expression of the individual and local colour in literature and criticised the prevailing situation where Chinese intellectuals were tending to downplay their regional character in search of 'narrow nationalism'.<sup>67</sup> In other words, a degree of rehabilitation of traditional Chinese culture and an increase in attention given to local diversity was taking place among some intellectuals as a reaction against the effusive iconoclasm of the May Fourth Movement.

The emergence of pastoral 'stories', such as Fei Ming's, derives also from the cultural trend of the era. Since the crucial relationship between fiction and society was articulated in 1897-98 by Yan Fu (严复, 1854-1921), Xia Zengyou (夏曾佑) and Liang Qichao (梁启超, 1873-1929) and with the first monthly Chinese magazine specialising in literature, *New Fiction* (*Xin xiaoshuo* 新小说) published in 1902 by Liang Qichao, fiction had become an important medium on the late Qing literary scene.<sup>68</sup> The emergent strain in late Qing fiction, in which an author's personal perceptions were given increasing prominence in his works, reached a full flowering in the May Fourth

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converging into a movement; and the "Transforming Phase" (1925-1927) when "the 'Revolution of Literature' was gradually replaced by 'Revolutionary Literature'". Aiura Takashi 相浦杲 also marks the year 1921 as a turning point of the May Fourth period in his *Gendai no Chūgoku bungaku* 现代の中国文学 (Tokyo: NHK Books, 1972), p. 45.

<sup>67</sup>Zhou Zuoren's influence on Fei Ming will be discussed in later chapters of this thesis.

<sup>68</sup>See the groundbreaking articles by Yan Fu and Xia Zengyou, "Benguan fuyin xiaoshuo yuanqi" 本馆附印小说缘起, *Guowenbao* 国闻报 (October 1897) and Liang Qichao, "Yiyin zhengzhi xiaoshuo xu" 译印政治小说序, *Qingyibao* 清议报 (December 1898).

period. Reacting against the dominant classical forms of Chinese literature, the May Fourth writers were naturally attracted to the genres least bound by traditional conventions. Since the short story and the novel were 'forms which with certain exceptions were traditionally excluded from classical literature', they became the favourite forms of the new authors.<sup>69</sup> In this respect, Fei Ming's adaptation to the genre of fiction of the long-established pastoral theme, which had previously been solely prevalent in poetry and essays, was very innovative at the time.

Furthermore, Chinese society after the May Fourth Movement allowed many youths who had not been born into traditional literati-official families to form a new intelligentsia. As the grandson of a bamboo craftsman, Fei Ming was one of this group. Under such circumstances, Fei Ming's nostalgic slices of family life and country customs must have given him, and many newly urbanized Chinese students who were his readers, some emotional solace.

In the summer of 1923, Fei Ming joined the Shallow Grass Society (Qiancao she 浅草社), established in 1922 by the writer, Lin

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<sup>69</sup>Leo Ou-fan Lee, "Literary trends I: the quest for modernity, 1895-1927", *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume 12, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 454-461 and p. 481. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová also points out three major factors which contributed to fiction's dominance in the early stage of modern Chinese literature: "(1) traditional fiction was written in baihuawen, the language form that became central in the development of modern Chinese literature; (2) during a relatively long and uninterrupted period of development, fiction written in baihuawen acquired both thematic and stylistic features that made it best suited for a new literature; and (3) during the late Qing period, fiction was given an elaborate theory, which raised its status in the intellectual community." See Doleželová-Velingerová, "The Origins of Modern Chinese Literature", *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, ed. Merle Goldman (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 35.

Ruji (林如稷, 1902-1976).<sup>70</sup> The Shallow Grass Society advocated 'art for art's sake' and encouraged the expression of 'self' and individuality.<sup>71</sup> Fei Ming seems to have felt empathy for the idea of 'art for art's sake' and, as shall be seen in later chapters, his literary views always inclined towards this tendency throughout his creative-writing career. In the Society's periodicals, *Shallow Grass* (*Qiancao* 浅草) and *Literature Thrice-Monthly* (*Wenyi xunkan* 文艺旬刊), Fei Ming published one poem<sup>72</sup> and one short story<sup>73</sup> in 1923 but did not contribute thereafter.<sup>74</sup> However, he continued to write, and in 1923 and 1924 not only produced a few poems and literary articles, but also a number of short stories that were to form his first collection in 1925.

During the early period of his writing career, Fei Ming enjoyed a good literary relationship with both Zhou Zuoren and Lu Xun. Fei Ming remained on friendly terms with Lu Xun even after Zhou Zuoren and Lu Xun split up in the summer of 1923.<sup>75</sup> In September

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<sup>70</sup>Lin Ruji was a writer, translator and later professor, and originally came from Sichuan province. For more details, see *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian, xiandai di er fence* 中国文学家辞典, 现代第二分册, ed. Beijing yuyan xueyuan *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian bianweihui* 北京语言学院《中国文学家辞典》编委会 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1982), pp. 596-598. According to Guo Jifang, Lin Ruji was a student of French at Shanghai Zhong Fa tonghui gongshang xueyuan 上海中法通惠工商学院 in 1922. Guo also mentions the activities and other members of the Shallow Grass Society in his book. There is also a detailed semi-fictionalized account of the scene in which Fei Ming is attending a tea party held by the Shallow Grass Society in Summer 1923. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 81-86.

<sup>71</sup>Zhang Xiaocui 张晓萃, "Qiancaoshe shimo" 浅草社始末, *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 4, 1987, p. 184.

<sup>72</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Xiawan" 夏晚, *Wenyi xunkan*, No. 9 (25 September 1925).

<sup>73</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Ji youren J. T.", *Qiancao*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (December 1923).

<sup>74</sup>Feng Zhi's letter to me dated 18 January 1989. Feng Zhi does not mention why Fei Ming did not contribute his works to *Qiancao* after 1923.

<sup>75</sup>Lu Xun mentioned his contacts with Fei Ming seven times in his diary written between 1925 and 1929. For example, in the entry dated 30 May 1929,

1923, Fei Ming published a review of *A Collection of Modern Japanese Stories* (*Xiandai Riben xiaoshuoji* 现代日本小说集) translated by Zhou and Lu.<sup>76</sup> It seems that he wrote the review through his connections with Zhou Zuoren rather than Lu Xun, and in the review mentioned only Zhou. In April 1924, Fei Ming wrote another review<sup>77</sup>, this time of Lu Xun's *Call to Arms* (*Nahan* 呐喊)<sup>78</sup>, in which he commented that in general he liked literary works which describe the lowly with sorrow and compassion<sup>79</sup>, and that therefore "Kong Yiji" (孔乙己) suited his taste.<sup>80</sup> In the same review, he also stated that "Hometown" ("Guxiang" 故乡) made him feel he never wanted to read it again. It is possible that Fei Ming found Lu Xun's dark desolate picture of the first-person narrator's hometown contrary to his nostalgic romantic image and therefore not appealing. It seems

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Lu Xun recorded that he received a letter from Fei Ming and gave Fei Ming a book when Fei Ming visited him that day.

<sup>76</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Xiandai Riben xiaoshuo ji (zagan)" 现代日本小说集 (杂感), *Chenbao fujian*, No. 235 (15 September 1923). Fei Ming later wrote in his essay, "Sanwen" that among the short stories in *A Collection of Modern Japanese Stories*, he especially liked "Kyōshū" 乡愁 by Katō Takeo 加藤武雄 and "Kingyo" 金鱼 by Suzuki Miekichi 铃木三重吉. The influences of these stories will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.

<sup>77</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Nahan", *Chenbao fujian*, No. 81 (13 April 1924).

<sup>78</sup>*Nahan* was published in August 1923 by Beijing xinchao she.

<sup>79</sup>This matches Fei Ming's own characterization in his stories. See Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.

<sup>80</sup>Probably because of this comment by Fei Ming, the writer, Hsüeh-lin [= Su Xuelin 苏雪林] classifies Fei Ming as one of the "Disciples of Lu [Xun]" in her "Present Day Fiction and Drama In China", collected in Joseph Schyns, *1500 Modern Chinese Novels & Plays* (Peiping: 1948; republished Farnborough, Hants.: Gregg International Publishers Limited, 1965, second impression, 1970), pp. VII-VIII. However, Fei Ming seems always to have been closer to Zhou Zuoren than to Lu Xun and his works bear more similarities with Zhou Zuoren's, which will be discussed later in this thesis. There is, therefore, more reason to agree with Sima Changfeng's 司马长风 statement in his *Zhongguo xin wenxue shi, shangjuan* 中国新文学史, 上卷 (Hong Kong: Zhaoming chubanshe, 1975, third rpt. 1980), p. 167, that it is wrong to categorize Fei Ming as 'a writer with Lu Xun's style' (『鲁迅风』的作家).

from this that Fei Ming's relationship with Lu Xun was ambivalent in nature at this time.

In 1924, Fei Ming graduated from the preparatory course and entered the English Literature Department of Peking University. He also kept up with his prose writing. In February 1925, Fei Ming started to publish his stories in the weekly magazine *Yu Si* (语丝 *Threads of Talks*) which had been set up in November 1924 by the essayist, Sun Fuyuan (孙伏园, 1894-1966)<sup>81</sup> with Lu Xun's support. *Yu Si*, which advocated the expression of free individual thought and the exercise of independent judgment, was the magazine for which Fei Ming mainly wrote between 1925 and 1928. Fei Ming might have contributed his works to *Yu Si* because he found its individualistic nature agreeable. It is also likely that he did so through his personal connection with Zhou Zuoren and Lu Xun.<sup>82</sup>

It seems that at this early stage of Fei Ming's literary career, the publication of his works in particular periodicals was prompted more by his personal connection with the personalities involved than by his solid belief in the principles maintained by them. For example, apart from *Yu Si*, in 1925, he published his works in several periodicals which reflected opposing political views such as *Modern*

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<sup>81</sup>Sun Fuyuan was originally from Zhejiang province and a graduate of Peking University. For more details, see *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian, xiandai di si fence* 中国文学家辞典, 现代第四分册, ed. *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian bianweihui* 《中国文学家辞典》编委会 (Chengdu: Sichuan wenyi chubanshe, 1985), pp. 166-168.

<sup>82</sup>According to Sima Changfeng, one month after the first publication of *Yu Si*, its editorship switched from Sun Fuyuan to Zhou Zuoren. See Sima Changfeng, *Zhongguo xin wenxue shi, shangjuan*, pp. 141-142. Guo Jifang also states that *Yu Si*'s editor in power was Zhou Zuoren, and suggests that Fei Ming joined *Yu Si* because of his relationship with Zhou. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 126-128.

*Criticism* (*Xiandai Pinglun* 现代评论)<sup>83</sup> and *Wilderness* (*Mangyuan* 莽原).<sup>84</sup> Simplistically speaking, the political view of the former, which included Hu Shi as one of its main contributors, was politically conservative, while the latter, which was led by Lu Xun, was against it. Being a young writer who had started to write only recently and was still in the process of developing his own direction and views, Fei Ming seems to have been fairly flexible at this stage.

In October 1925, Fei Ming's first collection of short stories was published, *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove* (*Zhulin de gushi* 竹林的故事).<sup>85</sup> In the preface Fei Ming wrote a dedication to Zhou Zuoren: "Here I bless Mr Zhou Zuoren. My own garden has grown from Mr Zhou's." (我在这里祝福周作人先生, 我自己的园地, 是由周先生的走来。) Zhou Zuoren

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<sup>83</sup>*Xiandai pinglun* was started in December 1924 in Peking. The main contributors included those who had come back from America or the U.K., the essayist, Chen Xiying (陈西滢, 1896-1973), Hu Shi and the poet, Xu Zhimo (徐志摩, 1897-1931). Fei Ming published his short stories, "Zhegu" 鹈鹕 and "Chulian" 初恋 in *Xiandai pinglun*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (14 February 1925) and Vol. 1, No. 17 (3 April 1925) respectively. (Chen Zhenguo's "Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" 冯文炳著作年表 in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao*, pp. 356-357 omits Fei Ming's contribution of his stories to *Xiandai pinglun*.) These publications were probably effected through his connection with Hu Shi. Soon afterwards, in May 1925, Lu Xun began opposing the people involved in *Xiandai pinglun* in the controversy about the student movement to ostracize the old-fashioned principal of Peking Women's Normal University (北京女子师范大学), Yang Yinyu 杨荫榆 (女师大事件). After this, *Yu Si* and *Xiandai pinglun* fell into an antagonistic relationship. Guo Jifang also suggests that Fei Ming published his stories in *Xiandai pinglun* through Hu Shi's introduction, and gives detailed account of the arguments between the writers of *Yu Si* and *Xiandai pinglun*. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 89 and pp. 150-154.

<sup>84</sup>*Mangyuan* was started in April 1925 in Peking. Its main editor was Lu Xun. Fei Ming published his short story, "Heshangliu" 河上柳 in *Mangyuan* No. 3 (8 May 1925), probably through Lu Xun's introduction.

<sup>85</sup>Feng Wenbing, *Zhulin de gushi* (Beijing: Beixin shuju, 1925). Chen Zhenguo wrote that the publication date of the book was July 1925 in his articles collected in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao*: "Feng Wenbing wenxue huodong nianbiao" and "Feng Wenbing zhuzuo mulu" 冯文炳著作目录. However, the book was 'sent to the press' (付印) in July and 'first published' (初版) in October.

himself wrote a supportive second preface to *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove*:

Feng Wenbing's stories are of a kind that I like. I am not a critic and cannot say whether they are literary works of the required standard or not, nor do I know to which school of literature they belong, but I enjoy reading them, which shows I think they are good.

冯文炳君的小说是我所喜欢的一种。我不是批评家，不能说它是否水平线以上的文艺作品，也不知道是那一派的文学，但是我喜欢读它，这就是表示我觉得它好。

He continues:

I also respect Feng's spirit of independence. He has been writing single-heartedly these three or four years, improving and developing his simple plain style, which is very delightful... Feng has in his own way cultivated his taste from Chinese and foreign literature, and although he walks his road alone, which may be a little lonely, it is still the surest way, and I hope that he will go on to follow a great artistic direction which is even more particularly his own.

冯君著作的独立的精神也是我所佩服的一点。他三四年来专心创作，沿著一条路前进，发展他平淡朴讷的作风，这是很可喜的。... 冯君从中外文学里涵养他的趣味，一面独自走他的路，这虽然寂寞一点，却是最确实的走法，我希望他这样可以走到比此刻的更是独殊地他自己的艺术之大道上去。

Zhou Zuoren was constant in his support for Fei Ming's writing, and in time wrote either a preface or a postscript to all of his collections of short stories and novels.

In November 1925, Fei Ming started writing the novel, *The Bridge* (*Qiao*, 桥).<sup>86</sup> As his literary career had become established, in April 1926, Fei Ming expressed his dissatisfaction with using his real name when writing. He wrote: "I have to use the loathsome name

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<sup>86</sup>Fei Ming, "Xu" 序, *Qiao* 桥.

again -- Wenbing." (又要用讨厌的名字 -- 文炳。) <sup>87</sup> Two months later, in June 1926, he decided upon the pen-name 'Fei Ming'. He commented on the decision in his diary dated 9 June 1926: "In the last four years, I have shed many outer shells, and in the last year in particular, I have become eccentric, so let yesterday<sup>88</sup> be a day to remember." (我在这四年以内, 真是蜕了不少的壳, 最近一年尤其蜕得古怪, 就把昨天当个纪念日子罢。) <sup>89</sup> He started publishing his writings under the name of Fei Ming in July 1926.<sup>90</sup>

Another diary entry for June 1926 reveals Fei Ming's writing habits:

When I write, the table must have been wiped clean, my clothes must be neat. If I have on my favourite shoes and socks, it is better, and if I have just had a bath then it is so much more agreeable. As for paper, it has to meet my satisfaction.

我有一个脾气, 写文章的时候, 要桌上抹得干净, 衣服穿得整齐, 鞋子, 袜, 越中意越好, 倘若是洗澡之后, 那就更高兴爽快。稿子纸, 也要自己觉得合式。<sup>91</sup>

Other diary entries reveal how he thought of himself; for example, "My elder brother understands me. Once when I lost my temper at home, he asked me, 'I find your writings very gentle, but

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<sup>87</sup>The filler of "Wuti zhi er" 无题之二, *Yu Si*, No. 76 (26 April 1926).

<sup>88</sup>'Yesterday' here means the day when the pen-name 'Fei Ming' was decided.

<sup>89</sup>Fei Ming, "Wangjile de riji", *Yu Si*, No. 128 (23 April 1927). This is the only personal record we have from Fei Ming except a few occasional very short notes attached to his articles.

<sup>90</sup>From "Wuti zhi san" 无题之三, *Yu Si*, No. 89 (26 July 1926). He used the other pen-names, Bing Huo 炳火 and Ding Wu 丁武 only four times; that is, Bing Huo for the short stories, "Zhuidaohui" 追悼会 and "Shi xiaoshuo" 是小说 (= "Shenpan" 审判) and Ding Wu for the articles, "Zhongguo ziyou yundong datongmeng xuanyan" 『中国自由运动大同盟宣言』 and "Xianhua" 闲话. After 1949, he used the real name Feng Wenbing for his writings except only once when he used 'Fei Ming' for *Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan* 废名小说选 in 1957.

<sup>91</sup>Fei Ming, "Wangjile de riji", *Yu Si*, No. 128 (23 April 1927).

why are you so short-tempered?' This is true, so I could not answer for the moment." (我的哥哥了解我。我有一回在家里发脾气，他问我：『我看你做的文章非常温和，而性情非常急躁。』这是真的，我一时不能作答。)92

An entry dated June 11th 1926 describes his attitude and feelings towards Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren:

Yesterday I read Lu Xun's "A Slap-Dash Diary Continued"<sup>93</sup> published in *Yu Si*, Number 87 and really felt that he smiled in a forced way. What made me feel especially bitter and pained was the fact that I usually write peaceful stories whilst he treads the thorny path in his bare feet as if it were all a joke. Yet I had an odd thought that if he were shot dead, I would definitely go and tend his corpse and be shot myself. Then I thought about going to see him but he might be sleeping and I'd disturb him if I went, so I changed my mind and headed for Badao Bay.

昨天读了语丝八十七期鲁迅的『马上支日记』，实在觉得他笑得苦。尤其使得我苦而痛的，我日来所写的都是太平天下的故事，而他玩笑似的赤着脚在这荆棘道上踏。又莫明莫妙的这样想：倘若他枪毙了，我一定去看护他的尸首而枪毙。于是乎想到他那里去玩玩，又怕他在睡觉，我去耽误他，转念到八道湾。<sup>94</sup>

'Badao Bay' was where Zhou Zuoren lived. This diary entry seems to confirm that although Fei Ming had great respect for Lu Xun, he felt closer to Zhou Zuoren on a personal level. It may be said of Chinese writers of the time, that siding with either Lu Xun or Zhou Zuoren was in itself an indication of their literary and ideological direction. In this light, 'I changed my mind and headed for Badao Bay' is

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid. Also, Fei Ming wrote in his article in 1927: "My temper is, just as my elder brother says, really impetuous..." (我的脾气，诚如我的哥哥所说，非常急躁...).

See Fei Ming, "Shuomeng" 说梦, [first published in *Yu Si*, No. 133 (28 May 1927)], *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 320.

<sup>93</sup>The English title is taken from *Lu Xun Selected Works, Volume Two*, trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, first edition 1957, third edition 1980), p. 284.

<sup>94</sup>Fei Ming, "Wangjile de riji", *Yu Si*, No. 128 (23 April 1927).

prophetic of his future standpoint. Less than a year after this diary entry, Fei Ming recanted his review of Lu Xun's *Call to Arms*: "I did write a short piece on *Call to Arms* but now it almost frightens me to think about it, because it was so unreliable." (我曾经为了《呐喊》写了一篇小文，现在我几乎害怕想到这篇小文，因为他是那样的不确实。)95

In June 1926, Fei Ming helped to organise the publication of the weekly literary magazine, *Camel* (*Luotuo* 骆驼) with Zhou Zuoren, Xu Zuzheng (徐祖正, 1895-1978)96 and Zhang Dinghuang (张定璜)97. The magazine had been planned in the early months of 1924 by Zhou, Xu and Zhang, and every so often they and their friends would meet to discuss plans for the magazine, calling themselves 'Camel colleagues' (Tuoqun tongren 驼群同人).98 Fei Ming was probably one of these 'Camel colleagues'. The magazine turned out to be abortive and in the end only one issue was produced.99 *Camel* was the predecessor

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95 Fei Ming, "Shuomeng", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 320.

96 Xu Zuzheng was a writer originally hailing from Jiangsu province. After coming back from Japan in 1922, he became Professor in the Oriental Literature Department of Peking University in 1923. For more details, see *Chūgoku gendai bungaku jiten* 中国现代文学事典, ed. Maruyama Noboru 丸山昇, Ito Toramaru 伊藤虎丸 and Shinmura Tōru 新村徼 (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1985), p. 135.

97 Zhang Dinghuang came from Jiangxi and studied at Tokyo Imperial University. He taught at Peking University and Peking Women's Normal University after returning from Japan in 1921. See *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集, Vol. 15 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), p. 447.

98 "Zhou Zuoren riji", dated 3 November 1925, quoted in *Zhou Zuoren zhuan*, p. 356. Also, Zhou Zuoren, "Daibiao 'Luotuo'" 代表『骆驼』, *Yu Si*, No. 89 (26 July 1926).

99 *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue qikan mulu* 中国现代文学期刊目录 1902-1944 (Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1961, rpt. Washington: Center for Chinese Research Materials Association of Research Libraries, 1968), p. 8. According to *Zhou Zuoren nianpu* 周作人年谱, ed. Zhang Juxiang 张菊香 and Zhang Tierong 张铁荣 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1985), p. 225, "On 26 July 1926, the literary weekly, *Camel*, for which Zhou collaborated with Feng Wenbing and Xu Zuzheng, was published." (与冯文炳, 徐祖正合办的文艺周刊《骆驼》出刊。) According to Guo Jifang, *Camel* was a magazine for pure literature (纯文学性杂志) and calligraphy of the two characters "Luotuo" on the front cover was by

of *Camel Grass* (*Luotuocao* 骆驼草), the literary magazine edited by Fei Ming in 1930.<sup>100</sup>

The Northern Expedition of the Guomindang against the warlords, which began in July 1926, gave Fei Ming reason to feel personally anxious. On 10 October 1926, the Wuchang garrison surrendered and Hubei was then largely under the control of the Nationalist army. He expressed his concern for his elder brother who was working as a primary school teacher in Wuchang in this precarious situation in his diary dated 11 October 1926.<sup>101</sup>

Fei Ming's poems written in the winter of 1926 reflect his deep dissatisfaction with a society suffering successive civil wars:

God created everything,  
But, do you want to kill yourself?  
You have to make a knife for yourself.  
上帝造就了一切,  
但是, 你要自杀吗,  
须得自己去造一把刀。<sup>102</sup>

and:

Leaning at my door is a beggar with legs amputated below the knees and a ragged cloth wrapped round them.  
I wish everyone throughout the world would go down on their knees in front of 'life' like this,  
And see how embarrassed he would be!  
在我的门口有一个折断了腿破布包着膝头沿门讨饭者。  
我愿普天下人都这样跪在『生』之前,

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Shen Yinmo (沈尹默, 1883-1971). See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 215.

<sup>100</sup>Zhou Zuoren *zhuan*, p. 356. Guo Jifang also suggests the link between the magazines, *Camel* and *Camel Grass* in *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>101</sup>Fei Ming, "Wangjile de riji", *Yu Si*, No. 128 (23 April 1927).

<sup>102</sup>Fei Ming, "Yirinei de jishou shi" 一日内的几首诗, *Luotuocao* 骆驼草, No. 3 (26 May 1930).

看他怎么好意思！ 103

The following poems show his misanthropy:

Irritating Humanity,  
You disturb me even in my dreams.  
讨厌的人们呵，  
你们就在梦里也是搅扰我。 104

and:

I imagined myself as a stone and threw it --  
Oh, it won't be thrown out of this world!  
我把我自己当一块石头丢了——  
哎哟，他丢不出这世界！ 105

The following verse with its suggestive contrast between an urban environment and beautiful nature seems to reflect Fei Ming's wish for peace:

I walk on a street,  
And suddenly run up the hill in this street --  
I widen my eyes, look up at the blue sky and ask:  
"Wasn't what you are seeing from high above originally a  
beautiful green forest!"  
我走在大街之上，  
忽而又跑上这大街里头的一座山——  
我鼓起眼睛仰对青天问了：  
『这你所高临的下界原来是一个好看的绿林！』 106

About the time when these poems were written, Fei Ming seems to have been going through a period of spiritual slump, as he also

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103 Ibid.

104 Feng Wenbing, "Xiaoshi" 小诗, *Yu Si*, No. 61 (11 January 1926).

105 Fei Ming, "Yirinei de jishou shi", *Luotuocao* No. 3 (26 May 1930).

106 Ibid.

described his condition as "weary" ("疲倦") and "bored" ("无聊") in his note.<sup>107</sup>

On June 17th 1927, the warlord Zhang Zuolin (张作霖, 1873-1928) proclaimed himself Generalissimo, and organised a military government in the North-East region. In the same month, Fei Ming's cousin, Feng Wenhua was killed in Huangmei.<sup>108</sup> On July 20th 1927, the Bureau of Education under Zhang's government closed Peking University, enforced a merger of nine institutes of higher education in Peking and established the Metropolitan University (Jingshi Daxuexiao 京师大学校). On August 6th 1927, Zhang proclaimed himself head of all the re-organised national institutions of higher education in Peking and formally announced the founding of the Metropolitan University. The Metropolitan University opened in September 1927 with its insistence on teaching the classics and *baguwen* (八股文 eight-legged essays)<sup>109</sup>, and the separation of male and female students.<sup>110</sup> Fei Ming was indignant and withdrew from the course temporarily.<sup>111</sup> He fell into financial difficulties and

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<sup>107</sup>Fei Ming's comment written on 11 May 1927 in the note attached to "Wuti zhi shiyi" 无题之十一, published in *Yu Si*, No. 132 (21 May 1927).

<sup>108</sup>Mentioned earlier in this chapter, p. 17.

<sup>109</sup>*Baguwen* is a literary composition prescribed for the imperial civil service examinations, known for its rigidity of form and ideas.

<sup>110</sup>*Beijing daxue xiaoshi 1898-1949* 北京大学校史 1898-1949, ed. Xiao Chaoran 萧超然, Sha Jiansun 沙健孙, Zhou Cheng'en 周承恩 and Liang Zhu 梁柱 (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1981), pp. 156-157.

<sup>111</sup>According to Guo Jifang, Fei Ming decided to withdraw from the university course because Zhou Zuoren was not offered a job by the Metropolitan University. Guo states that the Metropolitan University was different from Peking University only superficially in its leadership and name. After this statement, Guo dramatizes Zhou's reaction when Fei Ming (supposedly) told Zhou that he was going to leave the university temporarily to show his personal support: "Zhou Zuoren sent off Fei Ming to the doorway, looking at his back going far away and felt a warm emotion welling up within. He didn't feel he was alone but felt a kind of strong power supporting his back. In his

wrote to Zhou Zuoren, who invited him to live in a two-roomed house belonging to Zhou's friend the essayist, Zhang Tingqian (章廷谦, 1901-1981) since Zhang and his wife had taken refuge in the South.<sup>112</sup> Later, Fei Ming made a living by teaching Chinese at Chengda School (成达学校), a private middle school outside Xizhimen (西直门), under the direction of Zhang Dinghuang.<sup>113</sup>

Chengda School had a good selection of books on Western literature and attracted writers who had been lecturers and students at Peking University. Zhou Zuoren, Xu Zuzheng, the poet Feng Zhi (冯至, 1905-1993) and the writer, Chen Weimo (陈炜谟, 1903-1955)<sup>114</sup> were also working there as teachers. It seems that the people with whom Fei Ming spent time at Chengda School were in many cases the same people he knew already from the Shallow Grass and the Camel

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difficulties, there was Fei Ming's helping hand; what a warm hand it was!" (周作人将废名送到门口, 看着他远去的背影, 觉得心里涌出一阵热浪, 他不觉得自己孤独了, 他的背后有一种强大的力量。困难中, 废名援之以手, 这是一只多么温暖的手啊!) See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 175-178. However, the Metropolitan University seems to have been considerably different from Peking University in its ideological fundamentals. Even if Guo's statement about Zhou's employment situation was true, it could not have been the sole motive of Fei Ming's action.

<sup>112</sup>Zhang Tingqian, who was styled Maochen 矛尘 and came from Zhejiang province, was a good friend of his fellow provincials, Zhou Zuoren and Lu Xun. He wrote essays using the pen-name, Chuan Dao 川岛. He moved to Xiamen University in 1926 and stayed in the South until he came back to teach at Peking University in 1931. See *Chūgoku bunkakai jinbutsu sōkan* 中国文化界人物総鑑, ed. Hashikawa Tokio 橋川時雄 (Beijing: Zhonghua faling bianyinguan, 1940), p. 498, and *Lu Xun quanji*, Vol. 15, p. 543.

<sup>113</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Huai Fei Ming", *Yao Tang zawen*, p. 116. See also, He Xi 鹤西, "Huai Fei Ming" 怀废名, *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 3, 1987, p. 137.

<sup>114</sup>Chen Weimo was originally from Sichuan. He graduated from the English Literature Department of Peking University in 1927. Until he moved back to Sichuan in 1929, he taught in Peking, Tianjin and Harbin. See *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian, xiandai di er fence*, ed. Beijing yuyan xueyuan *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian bianweihui* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1982), pp. 478-479.

Societies. He became friends with the poet, He Xi (鹤西)<sup>115</sup> who was a librarian at the school and who also came from Hubei. He Xi recalled that during this period, he, Fei Ming and members of the Sunken Bell Society (Chenzhong she 沉钟社) would frequently get together at the playwright Yang Hui's (杨晦, 1899-1983)<sup>116</sup> house, and have lively discussions.<sup>117</sup> The Sunken Bell Society was a literary organization set up in 1925 by Yang Hui and former members of the Shallow Grass Society, such as Chen Weimo, Chen Xianghe (陈翔鹤, 1901-1969)<sup>118</sup> and Feng Zhi. The works published in the society's periodical, *Sunken Bell* (Chenzhong 沉钟) often expressed the agony of the individual.<sup>119</sup> Fei Ming's friendly relations with these people lasted long after they stopped working at Chengda School.

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<sup>115</sup>He Xi is a pen-name of Cheng Kansheng 程侃声. He published some articles with Fei Ming such as "Youtong" 邮筒 in *Luotuocao*, No. 3 (26 May 1930) and "Shi ji xin" 诗及信 in *Shuixing* 水星, Vol. 1, No. 4 (January 1935). Fei Ming also wrote about his friendship with He Xi in "Qin xu" 琴序 published in *Yuzhoufeng* 宇宙风, No. 37 (16 March 1937).

<sup>116</sup>Yang Hui graduated from the Philosophy Department of Peking University in 1920. For more details, see *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian* 中国现代文学词典 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1990; second printing, 1991), p. 103. According to Guo Jifang's *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 212, Yang Hui's original name was Yang Xingdong 杨兴栋, styled Huixiu 慧修, and he later changed his name into "Hui" (晦; dark, gloomy) because he felt despair at the darkness in society. He entered the Philosophy Department of Peking University in 1917 and was a classmate of the poet and essayist, Zhu Ziqing (朱自清, 1898-1948). When the members of the Sunken Bell Society were gathering at his house, he was the editor of *Xin Zhonghuabao fukan* 新中华报副刊 and *Huabei ribao fukan* 华北日报副刊.

<sup>117</sup>He Xi, "Huai Fei Ming", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 3, 1987, p. 137.

<sup>118</sup>Chen Xianghe was a writer and later professor, originally from Sichuan province. He had been studying English and Chinese literature at Peking University since 1923. For more details, see *Zhongguo wenxuejia cidian, xiandai di er fence*, pp. 502-504.

<sup>119</sup>For more details on the *Chenzhong* Society, and the difference between the *Chenzhong* Society and the *Qiancao* Society, see Zhang Xiaocui's 张晓萃 article, "Chenzhongshe shimo" 沉钟社始末, published in *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 3, 1987, pp. 54-65.

In the winter of 1927, Fei Ming moved to Zhenghuangqi village (正黄旗村) in Xishan (西山) near Xiangshan (香山) outside Peking.<sup>120</sup> Also, around this time, he began to form a close relationship with the prominent philosopher, Xiong Shili (熊十力, 1884-1968) who had been Professor of Buddhism at Peking University, and was also from Hubei province. Fei Ming had a great respect for Xiong Shili and together they would discuss such topics as the differences and similarities between Confucianism and Daoism. However, after Fei Ming started to read Buddhist sutras for himself, he developed ideas of his own, very different from those of Xiong's.<sup>121</sup> Once, when Fei Ming was visiting Xiong Shili at his house in Erdaoqiao (二道桥), they began to argue very loudly, then suddenly they fell quiet and started wrestling with each other. A neighbour saw Fei Ming running from the house panting. The next day, however, Fei Ming came again to see Xiong to discuss another (philosophical) issue with him.<sup>122</sup>

Fei Ming also remained friendly with his old 'Camel colleagues', Zhou Zuoren, the poet and essayist Yu Pingbo (俞平伯, 1900-1990), the poet Shen Qiwu (沈启无)<sup>123</sup>, and He Xi during his time in

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<sup>120</sup>It was while he was living in Xishan that he read Shakespeare's works, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Li Shangyin's poems. See Zhou Zuoren, "Huai Fei Ming", *Yao Tang zawan*, p. 116.

<sup>121</sup>This would lead to Fei Ming's thesis written towards the end of the Sino-Japanese War which contains views opposing those of Xiong Shili. This shall be discussed briefly later on in this chapter.

<sup>122</sup>According to Zhou Zuoren in his "Huai Fei Ming", Fei Ming and Xiong Shili held different opinions concerning the Buddhist priest, Sengzhao (僧肇, 384-414). However, Zhou did not elaborate any further. Zhou Zuoren, "Huai Fei Ming", *Yao Tang zawan*, p. 120.

<sup>123</sup>Shen Qiwu is a co-author of the book published in 1944, *Shuibian* 水边 which is a collection of poems by him and Fei Ming. According to Guo Jifang's *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 325, Shen Qiwu was Zhou Zuoren's student at Yanjing University.

Xishan.<sup>124</sup> He had a cottage there for five years, which in spring 1931 he named 'Often-out Studio' ('Changchu wuzhai' 常出屋斋). He spent some time in the city and some time there.<sup>125</sup>

In February 1928, he published his second collection of short stories, *The Peach Orchard* (*Taoyuan* 桃园).<sup>126</sup> In the postscript to *The Peach Orchard*, Zhou Zuoren described Fei Ming's life during this period as "living in seclusion in a farmhouse in the western suburbs, agreeing with the idea of being a 'Rebel and Recluse' (叛徒与隐逸合一)".<sup>127</sup> 'Rebel and Recluse' was an epithet which Isaac Goldberg<sup>128</sup> had coined for the English essayist and physician, Havelock Ellis (1859-1939). According to the critic, Ernst Wolff, this image was actually what Zhou attempted to maintain for himself in his preface to his collection of essays, *Water Plantains* (*Zexieji* 泽泻集), published in September 1927.<sup>129</sup> Here, then, Zhou is projecting his own image onto Fei Ming, which seems to be another indication of his influence on his student.

During the turbulent era of the late 1920s, with the May Thirtieth Incident (五卅运动)<sup>130</sup> and other successive political wars, a

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<sup>124</sup>Zhou Zuoren *shuxin* 周作人书信 (Shanghai: Qingguang shuju, 1933), pp. 211-212.

<sup>125</sup>Fei Ming, "Jinnian de shujia" 今年的暑假, *Xiandai* 现代, Vol. 1, No. 5 (September 1932).

<sup>126</sup>*The Peach Orchard* was published by Shanghai Kaiming shudian.

<sup>127</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Taoyuan ba" 桃园跋, *Kuyuzhai xubawen* 苦雨斋序跋文 (Shanghai: Tianma shudian, 1934), p. 130.

<sup>128</sup>Isaac Goldberg was the author of the book, *Havelock Ellis, a Biographical and Critical Survey* (New York, 1926).

<sup>129</sup>Ernst Wolff, *Chou Tso-jen* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971), p. 26 and pp. 79-80.

<sup>130</sup>The May Thirtieth Incident is also called the Shanghai Massacres. On 30 May 1925, British-led police in the International Settlement in Shanghai opened fire on demonstrators protesting the arrest of colleagues who had demonstrated against brutality in Japanese owned textile mills. Eleven people

revolutionary atmosphere was building up among literary circles. In 1926, Guo Moruo (郭沫若, 1892-1978) published the article, "Revolution and Literature" ("Geming yu wenxue" 革命与文学)<sup>131</sup> and advocated revolutionary literature. This call was supported by members of the Creation Society (创造社) such as Cheng Fangwu (成仿吾, 1897-1984) and Li Chuli (李初梨, 1900-), and members of the Sun Society (太阳社) such as Jiang Guangci (蒋光慈, 1901-1931) and Qian Xingcun (钱杏邨, 1900-1977). However, Fei Ming persisted in his individualistic literary attitude.

After the publication of his first story collection in 1925 until the early 1930s, Fei Ming's short story writing developed in two directions: aesthetic and satirical. In the aesthetic direction are his pastoral<sup>132</sup> stories. Fei Ming's satirical short stories can be divided into three types: those referring to socio-political incidents, those about dull urban intellectuals with their vanities and egos, and those describing the greyness of everyday life in a Chekhovian manner. Fei Ming commented on his contrasting pastoral and satirical stories in 1927: "They are equally my life at the moment, the products of my life at the moment" (他们同是我此刻的生命, 我此刻的生命的产儿).<sup>133</sup> Later in 1932, Fei Ming's pastoral fiction writing would culminate in the novel, *The Bridge*, and the pastoral and satirical trends of his fiction writing would converge in the novel, *The Life of Mr Maybe*

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died that day. The shootings sparked off nationwide protests and activities. See Nicholas R. Clifford, *Spoilt Children of Empire: Westerners in Shanghai and the Chinese Revolution of the 1920s* (Hanover and London: Middlebury College Press, 1991), pp. 97-112.

<sup>131</sup>Published in *Chuangzao yuekan* 创造月刊 in April 1926.

<sup>132</sup>The definition of the term, 'pastoral' will be discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>133</sup>Fei Ming, "Shuomeng", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 320.

(*Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan* 莫须有先生传).<sup>134</sup> His satirical short stories will be analysed in the following chapter.

In late 1928, the Metropolitan University was dissolved.<sup>135</sup> Fei Ming returned to Peking from Xishan to resume his studies, living initially in Zhou Zuoren's house.<sup>136</sup>

### Teaching in Peking (1929-1937)

In the autumn of 1929, Fei Ming graduated from the English Literature Department of Peking University and became a lecturer in the Chinese Literature Department of the university through an introduction from Zhou Zuoren.<sup>137</sup> He lectured on the poetry of Li Shangyin and Wen Tingyun (温庭筠, 812-866) as well as on New Poetry. Despite having lived in Peking or the suburbs for several years, Fei Ming still remained somewhat rustic and old-fashioned in his appearance and behaviour. Around 1929, there was a story which was apparently often told and laughed about among old students at Peking University, that Fei Ming wrote his answers for English exams with a brush.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>*The Life of Mr Maybe* will be discussed as a mock-pastoral novel later in Chapter Six.

<sup>135</sup>According to Zhou Zuoren's essay, "Huai Fei Ming", Fei Ming withdrew from his university studies for about a year. According to *Beijing daxue xiaoshi 1898-1949*, the Metropolitan University was changed into the "National Zhonghua University" 国立中华大学 in June 1928 (p. 163) and became the "National Beiping University" 国立北平大学 in August 1928 (p. 163) which was opened in March 1929 (p. 167). It was then renamed "Beijing Univeristy" in August 1929 (p. 168).

<sup>136</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Huai Fei Ming", *Yao Tang zawen*, p. 116.

<sup>137</sup>Lu Xun's letter to his wife, Xu Guangping (许广平, 1898-1968) dated 20 November 1932. *Lu Xun quanji*, Vol. 12 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1981), p. 122.

<sup>138</sup>Bian Zhilin 卞之琳, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 4.



Around this time, Fei Ming was becoming a closer friend of the essayist Liang Yuchun (梁遇春, 1906-1932; pen-name Qiu Xin 秋心)<sup>139</sup> and encouraged him to write more. Fei Ming wrote about his relationship with Liang Yuchun in his "Preface to the Posthumous Works of Qiu Xin" ("Qiu Xin yizhu xu" 秋心遗著序):

In the last three years, Qiu Xin and I often saw each other and almost always I urged him to write. I knew that his train of thought in writing was like beads of stars which ranged through the sky and were sparkling here and there, and yet transient without a thread. He could not be like a mirror, storing everything up. When he wrote something, he always let me have the pleasure of being among the first to read it ...  
近三年来, 我同秋心常常见面, 差不多总是我催他作文, 我知道他的文思如星珠串天, 处处闪眼, 然而没有一个线索, 稍纵即逝, 他不能同一面镜子一样, 把什么都收藏得起来。他有所作, 也必让我先睹为快 ...<sup>140</sup>

As the critic, Lin Fei (林非) points out, these words about Liang's 'train of thought' are actually suited to describe Fei Ming's own thinking.<sup>141</sup>

In March 1930, the magazine *Yu Si* ceased publication. Fei Ming decided to set up another magazine with Feng Zhi, and called the new

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<sup>139</sup>An essayist and graduate of the English Literature Department of Peking University, Liang Yuchun was a librarian at Peking University from 1929. Liang also contributed his works to *Luotuocao*. For more details on Liang, see Zhuo Ru 卓如, "Liang Yuchun de sanwen" 梁遇春的散文, *Minzhong xiandai zuojia zuopin xuanping* 闽中现代作家作品选评, ed. Zhuo Ru (Fujian: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 1982), pp. 261-267. According to Guo Jifang, Fei Ming and Liang Yuchun had been friends since they entered the preparatory course of Peking University at the same time in 1922. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 73.

<sup>140</sup>Fei Ming, "Qiu Xin yizhu xu" 秋心遗著序, *Xiandai*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (1 March 1933). ("Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* omits this.)

<sup>141</sup>Lin Fei points out the similarity between Fei Ming and Liang Yuchun in the way that their writings do not show a constant clear thread of thoughts. See Lin Fei, "Liang Yuchun (1904-1932)", *Xiandai liushijia sanwen zhaji* 现代六十年散文札记 (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi chubanshe, 1980), pp. 96-99.

weekly, *Camel Grass* (*Luotuocao* 骆驼草). Their original intention was to continue the tradition of *Yu Si* whereby writers could publish their opinions freely and independently.<sup>142</sup> Fei Ming thought up the name 'Camel Grass', which Feng Zhi explained:

Camels walk in deserts shouldering heavy loads over long distances. Some people have jobs as hard as camels'. Our power is weak and we cannot be 'camels' but we can be grass growing in the desert for passing camels to eat.

骆驼在沙漠上行走，任重道远，有些人的工作也象骆驼那样辛苦，我们力量薄弱，不能当“骆驼”，只能充作沙漠区生长的骆驼草，给过路的骆驼提供一些饲料。<sup>143</sup>

Feng Zhi explained in a letter to Yang Hui dated April 12th 1930 about the setting up of *Camel Grass*:

Our weekly magazine is to be published on the fifth of next month. The name is 'Luotuocao'. One sheet per issue with about ten thousand characters. Both Fei Ming and I are very happy to be engaged in this matter. I will ask Fei Ming to be Don Quixote; I'll be his Sancho Panza. If our weekly magazine could really play the part of the two big volumes of *Don Quixote*, it would really make us feel satisfied.<sup>144</sup> There are not many members -- apart from us, only Zhou and Xu. Fei Ming does the editorial work; I look after business. I hope that you will contribute your writings and some money. I am so happy that I feel like going to buy a student hat at the market in

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<sup>142</sup>Feng Zhi, "Luotuocao yingyinben, xu" 《骆驼草》影印本，序，*Yingyin chuban jianxun* 影印出版简讯 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1985), pp. 8-9.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid.

<sup>144</sup>*Don Quixote* was very much appreciated by Zhou Zuoren who published in 1923 his criticism of Lin Shu (林纾) and Chen Jialin (陈家麟)'s first Chinese translation of it. (Lin and Chen's co-translation, *Moxiazhuan* 魔侠传 was published in 1922.) Zhou also recommended *Don Quixote* as one of 'the books for the young to read' (青年必读书) in 1925 and thereafter the term 'Don Quixote' came to be used metaphorically in literary and political discussions. See Yao Xipei 姚锡佩, "Zhou Shi xiongdi de Tangjihede guan: yuanliu ji bianyi -- guanyu lixiang he rendao de sikao zhi yi" 周氏兄弟的堂吉诃德观：源流及变异——关于理想和人生的思考之一，*Lu Xun yanjiu ziliao*, No. 22 (October 1989), pp. 324-327.

order to revive the spirit of *Sunken Bell* when we first worked on it.

我们的“周刊”定于下月五日出生。名称叫作《骆驼草》。每期一张，万来字。我同废名都兴高采烈地弄这件事。我请废名当吉色德先生，我愿意当他的Sancho pansa[sic]，我们的“周刊”如果真能演出《吉色德先生》那样的两大本，那真使我们心满意足了。人数不多，除我们几人外，有周徐二位先生。编辑由废名，事务由我。希望你们寄点文章，并且寄点钱来。我很高兴，为想恢复当年办《沉钟》时的精神起见，我想到市场上去买一顶学生便帽了。<sup>145</sup>

The basic intention of *Camel Grass* also seems to have been somewhat similar to that of *Shallow Grass* which later matured into *Sunken Bell*.<sup>146</sup>

Apart from Fei Ming and Feng Zhi, the contributors to *Camel Grass* were those with whom Fei Ming was on friendly terms, such as the 'Camel Colleagues' Zhou Zuoren, Yu Pingbo, Liang Yuchun, Shen Qiwu and Xu Zuzheng, and the *Sunken Bell* Society members Lin Ruji, Chen Weimo and Yang Hui. The three characters 'Luotuocao' ('Camel Grass') on the front cover were written by the poet and calligrapher, Shen Yinmo (沈尹默, 1883-1971).<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>Yang Zhu 杨铸, ed., "Chenzhongshe tongxin xuan, san -- zhi Yang Hui" 沉钟社通信选 [三] -- 致杨晦, *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1988, p. 156.

<sup>146</sup> The introduction to the first issue of the periodical, *Qiancao* 浅草 states: "In this world of agony, a desert connects to another desert. Looking all around, there is only a piece of wasteland as far as the horizon. Who sow the seeds which have grown so freshly and exuberantly? Spreading out like a carpet and irrigating this dull, dry life with fresh, light green shoots. Shallow grass in the wasteland: we sing your praises earnestly; you are the happy one, the proud child of loving sunlight, Nature! We wish to be farmers, although our strength is so small: we wish that you will never suffer from devastation and wish to make every leaf of yours filled with -- filled with a great mission." (在这苦闷的世界里，沙漠尽接着沙漠，属目四望——地平线所及，只一片荒土罢了。是谁撒种了几粒种子，又生长得这般鲜茂？地毡般的铺着：从新萌的嫩绿中，灌溉这枯燥的人生。荒土里的浅草啊：我们郑重的颂扬你；你们是幸福的，是慈曦的自然的骄儿！我们愿做农人，虽是力量太少了；愿你不遭到半点蹂躏，使你每一枝叶里，都充满——充满伟大的使命。) See Zhang Xiaocui, "Qiancaoshe shimo", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 4, 1987, p. 173.

<sup>147</sup>Feng Zhi, "*Luotuocao* yingyinben, xu". Shen had also done the front cover calligraphy of the two characters 'Luotuo' for the *Camel* magazine.

*Camel Grass* was the only magazine to which Fei Ming contributed in 1930. He published articles, poems and some chapters of his novels, *The Life of Mr Maybe* and *The Bridge*. From September 1930, after Feng Zhi left for Germany, until November 1930 when *Camel Grass* ceased publication, Fei Ming was very busy editing the magazine single-handed.<sup>148</sup>

After Lu Xun had gone to Xiamen, and particularly during the 1930s, Fei Ming's relationship with him gradually turned rather sour. It is probably because Fei Ming developed his own literary and political views under the strong influence of Zhou Zuoren, which conflicted with Lu Xun's.

In April and May 1930, Fei Ming published articles under the pseudonym of Ding Wu (丁武) in *Luotuocao* and attacked Lu Xun with words full of cynicism for trying to attract the Guomindang's attention.<sup>149</sup> Fei Ming's political stance became apparent at this time: he edited *Camel Grass* which excluded 'revolutionary' political views, attacked Lu Xun and did not join The League of Left-wing Writers (左

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid.

<sup>149</sup>Ding Wu, "Zhongguo ziyou yundong datongmeng xuanyan" 『中国自由运动大同盟宣言』, *Luotuocao*, No. 1 (12 May 1930), and "Xianhua" 闲话, *Luotuocao*, No. 3 (26 May 1930). ("Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* omits them.) As for the identification of "Ding Wu" as another pen-name, see Kuan Hong 款蕻, "'Ding Wu' xiaokao" "丁武" 小考, *Lu Xun yanjiu ziliao*, No. 6 (October 1980), p. 17. Guo Jifang also describes the worsening relationship between Fei Ming and Lu Xun in the 1930s in details in *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 220-225 and pp. 228-233, inserting his own moral (or political) judgement such as; "On the path of Fei Ming's life, this was the most serious mistake he made, and this mistake had been moulded when he had decided to follow Zhou Zuoren in the first place ... , people cannot criticize Fei Ming because of the mistake, but we must think how we can truly feel Lu Xun, this great pulse." (在废名的人生道路上, 这是他所犯的一次最严重的错误, 而这一错误在当初废名决定追随周作人的时候便已铸成了 .... 人们并不会因为错误而去指责废名, 我们倒是应该想一想, 如何才能真正触摸到鲁迅这个伟大的脉搏。: pp. 232-233)

翼作家联盟)<sup>150</sup> which supported proletarian literature. Lu Xun knew immediately when he was being attacked by Ding Wu that it was actually Fei Ming<sup>151</sup>, however Lu Xun criticised him only in private and not in public.<sup>152</sup>

In June 1930, an anonymous "proletarian" writer published an article in the *New Morning News Supplement* (*Xin chenbao fukan* 新晨报副刊) and criticised the contributors to *Luotuocao* as those 'falling behind' ('落伍'者).<sup>153</sup> Soon after this, there appeared another article which criticised Zhou Zuoren in particular. These articles infuriated the contributors of *Camel Grass*.<sup>154</sup> As a counterattack, Fei Ming as editor, immediately published Yu Pingbo's article which advocated the idea of writing purely for self satisfaction (创作欲是自足的).<sup>155</sup>

In April 1932, Fei Ming wrote a preface to *Collected Essays of Zhou Zuoren* (*Zhou Zuoren sanwen chao* 周作人散文钞)<sup>156</sup>, in which he

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<sup>150</sup>The League of Left-wing Writers was set up in Shanghai on 2 March 1930. Its main leader was Lu Xun and members included the critic Qian Xingcun (钱杏邨, 1900-1977; one of whose pen-names was A Ying 阿英), the playwright Tian Han (田汉, 1898-1968), the novelists Mao Dun (茅盾, 896-1981), Rou Shi (柔石, 1902-1931), Ding Ling (丁玲, 1904-1986) and others. It promoted revolutionary proletarian literature based on Marxism.

<sup>151</sup>Lu Xun's letter to Zhang Tingqian, dated 24 May 1930 in *Lu Xun quanji*, Vol. 12, (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), pp. 17-18. The letter remained unpublished until 1976. See Wu Zuoqiao 吴作桥, "Lu Xun yu Fei Ming" 鲁迅与废名, *Jiangnan luntan* 江汉论坛, No. 10, 1986, p. 59.

<sup>152</sup>Lu Xun mocked Fei Ming and Zhou Zuoren privately in his letter to his wife, Xu Guangping dated 20 November 1932: "Zhou Qiming is extremely dim and does not know about external affairs. Fei Ming became a university lecturer through his introduction, so no wonder he attacks me. How can a dog not bark for his master?" (周启明颇昏, 不知外事, 废名是他荐为大学讲师的, 所以无怪攻击我, 狗能不为其主人吠乎?) See *Lu Xun quanji*, Vol. 12 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), p. 122.

<sup>153</sup>*Zhou Zuoren zhuan*, p. 362.

<sup>154</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup>Yu Pingbo, "Youshi moluo" 又是没落, *Luotuocao*, No. 7 (23 June 1930), quoted in *Zhou Zuoren zhuan*, p. 362.

<sup>156</sup>*Zhou Zuoren sanwen chao* was published in Shanghai by the Kaiming shudian in August 1932.

expressed his ideas about contemporary left-wing literature and his opinions about Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren. Fei Ming described the movement for Chinese proletarian literature at the time as 'making a commotion as if it were something valuable' (闹得象煞有价事) and that 'the general public is in such a fluster as though something new had appeared' (一般人都仿佛一个新东西来了, 仓皇失措). Fei Ming expressed his agreement with Zhou Zuoren's recognition of the movement as the revival of the *Zaidao* (载道, literature as a vehicle for the Way) school.<sup>157</sup> At the same time, he criticised Lu Xun as being 'over-emotional' (感情的成分多) and wrote that although Lu Xun seemed to stand with the crowd, he did not actually believe in the masses. By this, Fei Ming seems to have implied that Lu Xun could not possibly consider himself a member of the masses since most of his stories cynically describe members of the masses in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1911.

In October 1931, Fei Ming's third collection of short stories, *Jujubes* (枣) was published.<sup>158</sup> In the joint preface to *Jujubes*

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<sup>157</sup>In his lecture, "Zhongguo xin wenxue de yuanliu" 中国新文学的源流 delivered at Furen (辅仁) University in 1932 and prepared for publication the same year, Zhou Zuoren analysed Chinese literature as divisible into two classes according to the old antithesis between 'poetry expressing the heart's wishes' (诗言志) and 'literature as a vehicle for the Way' (文以载道). Both theses, despite their originally limited field of application, the first to lyrical poetry and the second, less obviously, principally to formal prose, are taken by Zhou in the usual manner to refer to literature in general, so the distinction is between literature simply as an uttering of feeling, free from any direction or control and oblivious of its putative effect, and literature written in the service of a philosophy of life. Zhou Zuoren thought them absolute alternatives, and that only one of them, the expressive theory, was valid; literature which sought to be a 'vehicle for the Way' was not literature. See David E. Pollard, *A Chinese Look at Literature -- The Literary Values of Chou Tso-jen in Relation to the Tradition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 1-29.

<sup>158</sup>*Jujubes* was published by Shanghai Kaiming shudian. The stories collected in *Jujubes* are mostly satires about city intellectuals who are feeble-minded

and *The Bridge*, Zhou Zuoren mentioned the reputation of Fei Ming's writings:

In the last year or two, Fei Ming's writings have been described as obscure. According to my friend's enquiry of the students at a girls' school in Hebei, Fei Ming's writings were the most difficult to understand, and the second most difficult were Pingbo's. Basically, there are usually two reasons for obscurity, namely, abstruseness or confusion of ideas. But also possibly the conciseness or eccentric knottiness of the style. I think that what has been said (about their obscurity) so far belongs to the latter case.

废名君的文章近一二年来很被人称为晦涩。据友人在河北某女校询问学生的结果，废名君的文章是第一名的难懂，而第二名乃是平伯。本来晦涩的原因普通有两种，即是思想之深奥或混乱，但也可以由于文体之简洁或奇僻生辣，我想现今所说的便是属于这一方面。<sup>159</sup>

After the publication of *Jujubes*, Fei Ming seems to have gradually begun groping for a new direction for his fiction writing. After March 1930, he seems to have become stuck with his writing of *The Bridge*<sup>160</sup>, which resulted in its publication as an unfinished novel in book form in April 1932. In the early months of 1932, Fei Ming started to write a new novel in a traditional Chinese style, in the hope that it might appeal to both refined and popular tastes ('雅俗共赏' 的小说), as his stories had so far been criticised for being obscure. In his original plan, the novel was entitled *Notes on Weaving Paper* (*Fangzhiji* 纺纸记) and consisted of one hundred chapters. After writing three chapters, he changed his mind and

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and who yield to the vulgarities of everyday life, and also about the grey dull everyday lives of ordinary people, written under the influence of Chekhov's short stories. These will be discussed again in the next chapter of this thesis.

<sup>159</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Zao he Qiao de xu" 枣和桥的序, *Kuyuzhai xubawen*, p. 136.

<sup>160</sup>Fei Ming, "Xu" 序, *Qiao* (first published Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932, rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 1.

decided to make *Notes on Weaving Paper* into another novel, entitled *Plantain Dream* (*Bajiaomeng* 芭蕉梦).<sup>161</sup> Yet, in the end, he only got as far as the prologue.

Failing in his attempt to produce a new novel, Fei Ming thought of concentrating on a sequel to *The Bridge* instead.<sup>162</sup> To achieve this, he lived in Xishan in the summer of 1932, which was, in his own words, 'walking into the ivory tower' (走进象牙之塔).<sup>163</sup> In the end, he managed to publish only six chapters of the sequel in 1932,<sup>164</sup> 1933,<sup>165</sup> 1934,<sup>166</sup> and 1937.<sup>167</sup> In December 1932, Fei Ming also published the book, *The Life of Mr Maybe* (*Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan* 莫须有先生传).<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>161</sup>According to Fei Ming's "Fangzhiji" 纺纸记, which was published as an essay-cum-incomplete story in *Xinyue yuekan* 新月月刊, Vol. 4, No. 6 (1 March 1933) and the essay "Jinnian de shujia" published in *Xiandai*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (September 1932), "Fangzhiji" and "Bajiaomeng" seems to have ended up as the two titles of a single novel.

<sup>162</sup>Fei Ming, "Fangzhiji" (published as an essay-cum-incomplete story), *Xinyue yuekan*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (1 March 1933).

<sup>163</sup>Fei Ming, "Jinnian de shujia", *Xiandai*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (September 1932). When Fei Ming used the expression, 'walking into an ivory tower', he was probably aware of Kuriyagawa Hakuson's (厨川白村, 1880-1923) book, *Zōge no tō o dete* 象牙の塔を出て which had been translated by Lu Xun and published as *Chule xiangya zhi ta* 出了象牙之塔 in 1924-1925. The influence of Kuriyagawa's literary theory on Fei Ming will be discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis. Liu Anwei 刘岸伟 points out that Zhou Zuoren also parodied the titles of Kuriyagawa's books, *Jūji gaitō o yuku* 十字街頭を往く and *Chule xiangya zhi ta* and entitled his essay, "Shizijietou de ta" 十字街头的塔. See Ryū Gan'i (= Liu Anwei), *Tōyōjin no hiai -- Shū Sakujin to Nippon* 東洋人の悲哀 -- 周作人と日本 (Tokyo: Kawaide shobō shinsha, 1991), pp. 350-351. (Liu Anwei writes and publishes in Japanese.)

<sup>164</sup>"Shuishang" 水上 and "Yaoshi" 钥匙, *Xinyue yuekan*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (1 November 1932).

<sup>165</sup>"Chuang" 窗, *Xinyue yuekan*, Vol. 4, No. 7 (1 June 1933).

<sup>166</sup>"Heye" 荷叶, *Xuewen yuekan*, 学文月刊, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1 June 1934). ("Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* omits this.)

<sup>167</sup>"Yinghuo" 萤火, *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1 July 1937) and "Qianniuhua" 牵牛花, *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1 August 1937).

<sup>168</sup>Fei Ming had finished writing a draft of *The Life of Mr Maybe* in autumn 1931. See Fei Ming, "Fangzhiji", *Xinyue yuekan*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (1 March 1933). *The Life of Mr Maybe* was published by the Kaiming shudian in Shanghai.

In spite of the fact that two books of his were published in 1932, Fei Ming seems to have been depressed around this time. Yang Hui, who received a letter from Fei Ming, reported Fei Ming's melancholy to another member of the Sunken Bell Society, Chen Xianghe.<sup>169</sup> Apparently, Fei Ming did not give the reason for his sadness in the letter. However, it is likely that he was dissatisfied with his own writing: this feeling can be read between the lines of *The Life of Mr Maybe*.<sup>170</sup> He was probably also frustrated about the fact that his efforts to write the next chapters of *The Bridge* were not going smoothly.<sup>171</sup> Later, in 1957, Fei Ming wrote of this time:

At that time, some people laughed at me for taking ten years to produce *The Bridge*, and coming up with the by-product, *The Life of Mr Maybe*. Actually, I wrote less than half of *The Bridge*, and my plans for *The Life of Mr Maybe* were lengthy but yet again I suddenly stopped writing. All of these show my agony and the anxious state of my thoughts.

当时有人笑我十年造“桥”，同时又有“莫须有先生传”的副产物，其实“桥”写了一半还不足，“莫须有先生传”计划很长也忽然搁笔，这都表示我的苦闷，我的思想的波动。<sup>172</sup>

Having difficulty in developing his fiction writing further, Fei Ming turned his creative energy to writing poems and essays in the 1930s.

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<sup>169</sup>Chen Xianghe wrote in his letter to Yang Hui and Fei Ming dated 30 October 1932: "Received a brief letter from Fei Ming; I don't know why he is so melancholy and sad." (接到废名很简单的一封信，我不知道为甚么是那样的惆怅而且难过。) See Yang Zhu 杨铸 ed., "Chenzhongshe tongxin xuan, si -- zhi Yang Hui" 沉钟社通信选 [四] —— 致杨晦, *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 2, 1988, p. 172.

<sup>170</sup>This will be discussed later in Chapter Six of this thesis.

<sup>171</sup>Fei Ming wrote that he felt he had taken his time over in writing the sequels to *The Bridge* in a note attached at the beginning of "Fangzhiji".

<sup>172</sup>Fei Ming, "Xu", *Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1957), p. 3.

He became very interested in writing New poems and produced a number of them.<sup>173</sup>

In 1933, Fei Ming's friendship with the poet, Bian Zhilin (卞之琳, 1910-) began. Bian Zhilin had published his first poetry collection, *Leaves of Three Autumns* <sup>174</sup> (*Sanqiucuo* 三秋草) in May 1933 and had just graduated from Peking University. Bian went to Fei Ming's house on Zhonglao Hutong (中老胡同) near Shatan to present him with a copy of his first book. Bian wrote about his friendship with Fei Ming before 1937:

Although privately, he loved to talk about Chan Buddhism and Daoism, he was still full of human warmth. He paid much attention to both the literary and emotional aspects of my life. 他虽然私下爱谈禅论道，却是人情味十足。他对我的写作以至感情生活十分关注。<sup>175</sup>

Fei Ming and Bian Zhilin not only formed a friendship, but also had a literary influence on each other, which shall be discussed in the conclusion to this thesis.

In the mid 1930s, having been a lecturer for a few years and become financially secure, Fei Ming sent for his wife and

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<sup>173</sup>He Xi and Fei Ming, "Youtong", *Luotuocao*, No. 3 (26 May 1930). During the three months of the winter 1930-1931 he spent in Qingdao, he wrote a number of poems and in 1931 he produced many more. These shall be referred to in the next chapter of this thesis.

<sup>174</sup>The translation of the title is taken from Lloyd Haft, *Pien Chih-lin -- A Study in Modern Chinese Poetry* (Dordrecht-Holland, Cinnaminson-U.S.A.: Foris Publications, 1983), p. 20.

<sup>175</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 1.

daughter<sup>176</sup>, Feng Zhici (冯止慈), to come from his hometown and live in a rented house at Di'anmen (地安门) in Peking.<sup>177</sup>

In April 1934, the fortnightly magazine, *Renjianshi* (人间世 *Human World*) came into publication. The main editor was the writer, Lin Yutang (林语堂, 1895-1976) who encouraged familiar essays (*xiaopinwen* 小品文)<sup>178</sup> in the magazine. Fei Ming published five articles in the magazine. He also published three articles during the period 1936-1937 in the magazine, *Yuzhoufeng* (宇宙风 *Wind of the Universe*) which was also started by Lin Yutang in September 1935. Both *Renjianshi* and *Yuzhoufeng* printed contributions by similar people, such as Lin Yutang, Zhou Zuoren, the novelist and playwright Lao She (老舍, 1899-1966) and the cartoonist and essayist Feng Zikai (丰子恺, 1898-1975). According to Sima Changfeng, both periodicals can be considered as a development of *Yu Si* and promoted humour, individualism and an impromptu nature in writing.<sup>179</sup> It is apparent then, that the main periodicals and literary societies in

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<sup>176</sup>According to Guo Jifang's *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 233, Fei Ming's daughter was born in 1929.

<sup>177</sup>Yao Tang, "Huai Fei Ming". As for the timing of Fei Ming's family's moving to Di'anmen, Bian Zhilin writes in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 1, that Fei Ming's house was at Zhonglao Hutong in 1933, and at Beiheyuan in 1937. Guo Jifang writes that Fei Ming's family came to live at Di'anmen nei Beiheyuan jia shi hao 地安门内北河沿甲十号 around 1934 in *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 233.

<sup>178</sup>'Xiaopinwen' had the elements of both English 'essay' and the traditional Chinese essay since the Ming period, and was written in the combined style of classical Chinese and post-May Fourth Movement vernacular Chinese. See *Chūgoku gendai bungaku jiten* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1985), pp. 131-132. According to Chih-Ping Chou, the genre has never been clearly defined, but the characteristics of *xiaopinwen* may be summed up by two words: individuality and freedom. *Xiaopinwen* writers may be characterized as favouring the substitution of aesthetic for utilitarian standards. See Chih-Ping Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School* (Cambridge, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 91-92.

<sup>179</sup>Sima Changfeng, *Zhongguo xin wenxue shi, zhongjuan* (Hong Kong: Zhaoming chubanshe, first published 1976, fourth printing 1987), pp. 3-6.

which Fei Ming participated or to whose members he was close during his creative writing career, such as *Shallow Grass*, *Sunken Bell*, *Yu Si*, *Camel Grass*, *Renjianshi* and *Yuzhoufeng* shared a common character: they all took a tolerant, unrestrictive attitude towards one's individualistic, literary activities. This fact seems to indicate Fei Ming's general literary ethos as a writer.

Fei Ming expressed his opinion about the literary climate at the time in his essay about Zhou Zuoren, entitled "Mr Zhi Tang" ("Zhi Tang xiansheng" 知堂先生), written in July 1934:

I realized that in general, what is expressed in any kind of ancient and modern art is, no matter how sophisticated or not, moral, therefore propagandistic. From the facial make-up of a Chinese traditional play to the so-called immoral verse in modern Europe, on the stage of life, one is saddled with the moral consciousness after all. At the moment, I feel very stuffy and badly need to breathe fresh air.

悟到古今一切的艺术，无论高能的低能的，总而言之都是道德的，因此也就是宣传的，由中国旧戏的脸谱以至于欧洲近代所谓不道德的诗文，人生舞台上原来都是负担着道德之意识。当下我很有点闷窒，大有呼吸新鲜空气之必要。180

Although Fei Ming's statement indeed seems like a 'generalization', what he was feeling 'very stuffy' about and indirectly rebuking here, was, perhaps, politically orientated writing, especially the left-wing literature prevalent at the time.

Lu Xun, who had read "Mr Zhi Tang", criticised Fei Ming's attitude in his article, "When the Tendency Is Inevitable, There Must

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<sup>180</sup>Fei Ming, "Zhi Tang xiansheng", *Renjianshi*, No. 13 (5 October 1934), p. 68. Zhi Tang is one of Zhou Zuoren's pen-names.

Be Some Reason For It." ("Shisuobizhi, liyouguran" 势所必至, 理有固然) which remained unpublished until 1941.<sup>181</sup> Lu Xun wrote:

Fei Ming who sometimes publishes hesitant and incoherent writings of the 'looking at his shadow and lamenting his lot' style<sup>182</sup>, propagated his literary view in *Renjianshi* recently, which is that literature is not propaganda. This is an argument we are already sick of hearing. Whoever uses writing to say 'literature is not propaganda' is being propagandist. This is also an argument we are sick of hearing. Considering writing as having not the slightest influence on society is just like calling oneself 'Fei Ming' (abandon name), thinking that one has really disposed of one's name. 'Fei Ming' is a name. If he does not want to have the slightest influence on society, he should not write anything at all and if he wants to dispose of his name, he should not even write this pen-name, 'Fei Ming'. If a piece of writing really has no power at all, then the writer is really a piece of junk, and a parasite. His literary view is exactly that of a piece of junk and a parasite.

有时发表一些顾影自怜的吞吞吐吐文章的废名先生,这回在《人间世》上宣传他的文学观了:文学不是宣传。这是我们已经听得耳膜起茧了的议论。谁用文字说"文学不是宣传"的,也就是宣传——这也是我们已经听得耳膜起茧了的议论。写文章自以为对于社会毫无影响,正如称"废名"而自以为真的废了名字一样。"废名"就是名。要于社会毫无影响,必须连任何文字也不立,要真的废名,必须连"废名"这笔名也不署。假如文字真的毫无什么力,那文人真是废物一枚,寄生虫一条了。他的文学观,就是废物或寄生虫的文学观。<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup>According to *Lu Xun zhuyi xinian mulu* 鲁迅著译系年目录, ed. Shanghai Lu Xun jinian guan 上海鲁迅纪念馆 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1981), p. 269, the article was published after Lu Xun's death by his wife, Xu Guangping in *Mangliu xinji* 莽流新集, Vol. 1 (19 November 1941).

<sup>182</sup>The year before his death in 1936, Lu Xun described Fei Ming's stories using the same expression: "the straightforward reader sees only his intentional to-ing and fro-ing, and his attitude of looking at his shadow and lamenting his lot." (从率直的读者看来,就只见其有意低徊,顾影自怜之态了。) See Lu Xun, "Daoyan" 导言, *Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi, xiaoshuo erji* 中国新文学大系, 小说二集 (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1935), pp. 6-7.

<sup>183</sup>Lu Xun, "Shisuobizhi, liyouguran", *Lu Xun quanji*, Vol. 8 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), pp. 380-381. Lu Xun seems to have ignored Fei Ming's statement made in 1934 that literature is propaganda and concentrated his attack on the significance of the name 'Fei Ming'. See next footnote.

According to the note by Lu Xun's wife, Xu Guangping (许广平, 1898-1968) which was attached to this article, immediately after he had written it, Lu Xun told her not to publish it. Although Lu Xun had negative opinions about Fei Ming's literary attitude, he refrained from criticising Fei Ming publicly. Although Lu Xun never wrote down the reason for this, as the critic Wu Zuoqiao (吴作桥) suggests, it was perhaps Lu Xun's avuncular consideration for the much younger, less influential writer with whom he had once been on friendly terms.<sup>184</sup>

The increasing rift between Fei Ming and Lu Xun seems to have been a reflection of the opposing literary attitudes between the writers involved in the magazine, *Renjianshi* and Lu Xun. Lu Xun published an article entitled "Hermits" ("Yinshi" 隐士) under the *nom de plume*, Chang Geng (长庚) in February 1935<sup>185</sup> and mocked

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<sup>184</sup>Wu Zuoqiao commented: "This also embodies Lu Xun's concern and care for Fei Ming" (这也体现了鲁迅对废名的爱护与关照) in his article, "Lu Xun yu Fei Ming" published in *Jiangnan luntan*, No. 10, 1986, p. 59. Although I agree with Wu's view on this point, I generally disagree with his method of evaluating Fei Ming's stories in the article: he considers them as written more or less in imitation of Lu Xun. Wu also passes his subjective moral judgment on Fei Ming by writing, for instance: "Fei Ming said that after *Wandering* (*Panghuang* 彷徨), he did not understand Lu Xun and cast aside Lu Xun. However, Lu Xun's influence on him was a fact. Not admitting it is not acceptable." (废名曾说, 自《彷徨》以后, 他就不懂鲁迅了, 扔了鲁迅了。然而鲁迅对他的影响却是事实。不承认不行。) On the other hand, Dai Wenbao 戴文葆 suggests that the reason why Lu Xun told Xu not to publish it is because soon after writing it, he realized that Fei Ming had stated literature is propaganda. Dai also points out that several parts of Lu Xun's article allude cynically to Zhou Zuoren's essay, "Qiwen jiuwu" 弃文就武 published in *Duli pinglun* 独立评论, No. 134 (6 January 1935), in which Zhou satirized revolutionary writers who were attacking him. See Dai Wenbao, "Guanyu 'Shisuobizhi, liyouguran'" 关于《势所必至, 理有固然》, *Lu Xun yanjiu* 鲁迅研究, No. 5, 1984, pp. 138-143.

<sup>185</sup>In the journal, *Shanghai Taibai banyuekan* 上海《太白》半月刊, Vol. 1, No. 11.

literary mottos such as 'leisurely and carefree' (悠闲) held by the consciously 'apolitical' writers who contributed to *Renjianshi*.<sup>186</sup>

Fei Ming's essays published in *Renjianshi* and *Yuzhoufeng* were written in a mixture of spoken and classical Chinese. In fact, Fei Ming's interest in classical Chinese literature seems to have increased in the 1930s. His words at the end of an essay written in 1927, "Talking of Dreams" ("Shuo meng" 说梦) had been quite prophetic. He wrote: "'Not despising the people of today but loving the ancients', this is an aspirer's statement." ("不薄今人爱古人", 此是有怀抱者的说话。)<sup>187</sup>

From October 1936 to December 1936, Fei Ming published nineteen essays on traditional Chinese literature such as *The Analects*, *The Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan* 水浒传), and poems by Tao

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<sup>186</sup>Lu Xun taunted the 'hermits' of *Renjianshi*: "Failure to become a hermit is a defeat. This shows the connection between hermits and comfort: at least one does not have to struggle for existence, and one has plenty of time. Yet singing the praise of idleness and extolling tobacco and tea are one form of struggle, simply a more veiled form. Since even a 'hermit' still requires a rice bowl, the trade sign needs to be kept freshly varnished and intact. This is why hermits turn deaf ears and unseeing eyes when Mount Tai crumbles or the Yellow River floods; but if any comment is made on the hermit brotherhood, be it a thousand li away and no more than half a sentence, their perceptions are strangely acute and they rise up as if the matter were of greater moment than the destruction of the world. Yet it may be something completely inconsequential. Once we understand this, we need not be shocked by hermits. We can understand them without making any comment, and that will save both sides trouble." ("谋隐"无成,才是沦落,可见"隐"总和享福有些相关,至少是不必十分挣扎谋生,颇有悠闲的余裕。但赞颂悠闲,鼓吹烟茗,却又是挣扎之一种,不过挣扎得隐藏一些。虽"隐",也仍然要吃饭,所以招牌还是要油漆,要保护的。泰山崩,黄河溢,隐士们目不见,耳无闻,但苟有议及自己们或他的一伙的,则虽千里之外,半句之微,他便耳聪目明,奋袂而起,好像事件之大,远胜于宇宙之灭亡者,也就为了这缘故。其实连和苍蝇也何尝有什么相关。明白这一点,对于所谓"隐士"也就毫不诧异了,心照不宣,彼此都省事。) The English translation is by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang in *Lu Xun Selected Works, Volume Four* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, first edition 1960, third edition 1980), p. 171. The Chinese is from *Lu Xun quanji*, Vol. 6 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1981), pp. 224-225.

<sup>187</sup>Fei Ming, "Shuo meng", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 325. "Not despising the people of today but loving the ancients" ("不薄今人爱古人") is a quotation from the poem "Xiwei liu jueju, wu" 戏为六绝句,五 by Du Fu 杜甫.

Yuanming and Li Shangyin in the supplement *Bright Pearl* (*Mingzhu* 明珠) of *The World Daily* (*Shijie ribao* 世界日报) edited by his friend the poet Lin Geng (林庚, 1910-).<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, in an article published in 1937, Fei Ming named three Chinese classics, *The Book of Songs* (*Sanbaipian* 三百篇), *The Zuo Commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左传) and *The Book of Changes of the Zhou Dynasty Period* (*Zhouyi* 周易)<sup>189</sup> as his favourite books.<sup>190</sup>

Fei Ming's feeling of loneliness in the 1930s, which seems to be reflected in some of his poems, can be observed in the following episode. One of Fei Ming's students, now Professor Yin Falu (阴法鲁) of Peking University, remembered Fei Ming as his composition teacher in 1935-1936. In class, Fei Ming sometimes talked about his own poems, and he corrected his students' essays very carefully. Fei Ming explained the background to his poem, "Street Corner" ("Jietou" 街头) to Professor Yin: he was walking alone down a wide street in Peking and saw dust rising after passing cars and a postbox standing in the distance. He felt the loneliness of the social climate, of his life in Peking, and of the lives of human beings in general.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>Other main contributors were Zhou Zuoren and Yu Pingbo. See Zhou Zuoren, "Huai Fei Ming", *Yao Tang zawen*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>189</sup>*Zhouyi* is also called *Yijing* (易经 *The Book of Changes*). The name "Zhouyi" comes from the idea that it was written by people of the Zhou dynasty period (周人). Some say that "zhou" 周 has the meanings of "thorough" ("zhoumi" 周密), "all round" ("zhoubian" 周遍) and "prevalent" ("zhouliu" 周流). See *Cihai*, (*shang*) 辞海 (上) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1979), p. 457.

<sup>190</sup>Fei Ming, "Ershiwunian wo de aidushu" 二十五年我的爱读书, *Yuzhoufeng*, No. 32 (1 January 1937).

<sup>191</sup>Interview on 28 July 1988 in Peking with Professor Yin Falu who was Fei Ming's student (1935-1936) and colleague (1946-1952). The poem reads:

as I walk to the street corner,  
a car drives by;  
thus, the loneliness  
of the mailbox.

As Michelle Yeh suggests<sup>192</sup>, Fei Ming's loneliness at the time was perhaps a response, at least in part, to a bewildering, swiftly changing China where modern, new technology such as the automobile was being introduced.<sup>193</sup> Supposing that the somewhat

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mailbox P O  
thus, can't remember  
the car's number X,  
thus, the loneliness  
of Arabic numbers,  
loneliness of the car,  
loneliness of the street,  
loneliness of mankind.

行到街头乃有汽车驰过，  
乃有邮筒寂寞。  
邮筒 P O  
乃记不起汽车号码 X，  
乃有阿拉伯数字寂寞，  
汽车寂寞，  
大街寂寞，  
人类寂寞。

The translation of the poem was taken from Michelle Yeh, "A New Orientation to Poetry: The Transition from Traditional to Modern", *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, Vol. 12, (December 1990), p. 83. "Jietou" is collected in *Shuibian* and *Feng Wenbing xuanji*.

<sup>192</sup>Yeh explains the feeling of loneliness expressed in this poem as follows: "Considering the fact that the poem was published in 1937, we can see the poem as a response to a bewildering, swiftly changing China where Western inventions such as the automobile were still relatively novel and rare. Loneliness in the poem can be interpreted to derive from an unspoken estrangement of the poet from modern technology (the car a monstrous species whose speed eludes his comprehension); from the contrast between the speed with which the car disappears and the helpless immobility of the mailbox (and the poet?) standing on the street; and, finally, from the sudden awareness of an inherent paradox in modern life, the paradox of simultaneous advancement (in convenience and material comfort) and loss (in relevancy and connectedness) for mankind." See Michelle Yeh's article, *ibid.*, pp. 84-85. See also the first chapter (pp. 5-10) of her book, *Modern Chinese Poetry: theory and practice since 1917* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991).

<sup>193</sup>In the poem, "Lifadian" 理发店 written in 1935, published in *Xinshi* 新诗, Vol. 1, No. 3 (10 December 1936) and later collected in *Shuibian*, *Zhaoyinji* and *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, Fei Ming also expresses a sense of loneliness using the image of a radio ("low grade radio" "下等的无线电"). Also, in the poem, "Beiping jieshang" 北平街上 [written on 3 May 1936, published in *Xinshi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (10 December 1936) and collected in *Shuibian* and *Zhaoyinji* as "Jieshang", and in *Feng Wenbing xuanji* as "Beiping jieshang"], Fei Ming develops a cynical

old-fashioned Fei Ming (user of a brush in his English exams) was sensing uneasily "an inherent paradox" of modern life, that is, of "advancement (in convenience and material comfort) and loss (in ... connectedness) for mankind"<sup>194</sup>, it would seem quite understandable that he withdrew himself into Chinese tradition, such as the classics and Daoism and Chan Buddhism.<sup>195</sup> This might have been accelerated in the 1930s now that he had more or less exhausted his energy for his pastoral fiction writing.

From 1936 to 1937, Fei Ming joined the 'Poetry Reading Circle' ('Dushihui' 读诗会).<sup>196</sup> Its members included Zhou Zuoren, Feng Zhi, Ye Gongchao (叶公超, 1904-1981), Bian Zhilin<sup>197</sup> and He Qifang (何其芳, 1912-1977) from Peking University, Zhu Ziqing (朱自清, 1898-1948), Yu Pingbo, Li Jianwu (李健吾, 1906-1982) and Lin Geng from Qinghua (清华) University, and Lin Huiyin (林徽因, 1903-1955) and Shen Congwen (沈从文 1902-1988). Meetings were held at the house of the

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picture of the world with modern technology such as cars (汽车), aeroplanes (飞机) and bombs (炸弹). He finishes the poem: "Move the bombs into the students' experiments room. The poet's heart is filled with the world's folly." (炸弹搬到学生实验室里去罢 / 诗人的心中宇宙的愚蠢)

<sup>194</sup>See footnote 192, above.

<sup>195</sup>Guo Jifang recounts Fei Ming's daughter, Feng Zhici's statement that Fei Ming used to sit in meditation everyday when she was small, and that Fei Ming kept doing it even during his later years. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 236.

<sup>196</sup>According to Shen Congwen, the 'Poetry Reading Circle' put an emphasis on reading poems aloud to examine how successful New poems could be audibly. The conclusion was that if New poems are to be extremely 'free', they must do without audible beauty. However, Shen commented that this kind of 'newness' tended to lead to 'obscurity' and that Fei Ming's poems were its extreme example. See Shen Congwen, "Tan langsong shi" 谈朗诵诗, *Shen Congwen wenji* 沈从文文集, Vol. 11 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1985), pp. 251-252. Bian Zhilin also points out the non-fluency of Fei Ming's poems, which lack rhythm. See Bian Zhilin, "Xu" 序, *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 9.

<sup>197</sup>According to his letter to me dated 8 August 1989, Bian Zhilin was not a regular member of the circle. Bian wrote in the letter: "At the beginning of 1937 ... I did attend such a meeting once or twice."

critic, Zhu Guangqian (朱光潜, 1897-1986) in Beiping Houmen (北平后门).<sup>198</sup> The common characteristic of these writers was that they respected the aesthetic rather than political effect of writings and aspired to create a nostalgically old-fashioned, romantic, lyrical world in their works.<sup>199</sup>

Towards the end of the 1930s, Fei Ming's interest in Buddhism occupied his mind increasingly, much more than before.<sup>200</sup> In autumn 1936 <sup>201</sup>, Fei Ming, who was living in a house at Jia 10,

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<sup>198</sup>Shen Congwen, "Tan langsong shi", *Shen Congwen wenji*, Vol. 11 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1985), pp. 251-252. Bian Zhilin also wrote: "I don't remember from when, but his [=Zhu Guangqian's] house (Di'anmen nei cihuidian sanhao) had gradually become an informal 'salon' among the small literary and artistic circle in Beiping." (他家(地安门内慈慧殿三号)不记得从什么时候起逐渐成了北平文艺小圈子中一个无形的"沙龙"。) See Bian Zhilin, "Zhuyi Shao Xunmei he yichang wenxue xiao lunzheng" 追忆邵洵美和一场文学小论争, *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 3 1989, p. 67.

<sup>199</sup>Many Chinese critics categorize these writers including Fei Ming as 'Jingpai' 京派 and discuss the overall trend of their works as a school. For example, Yan Jiayan 严家炎, "Di liu zhang Jingpai xiaoshuo" 第六章 京派小说, *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo liupai shi* 中国现代小说流派史 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1989), pp. 205-248. Wu Fuhui 吴福辉, "Xiangcun Zhongguo de wenxue xingtai -- Jingpai xiaoshuo xuan qianyan" 乡村中国的文学形态——《京派小说选》前言, *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan* 中国现代文学研究丛刊, No. 4, 1987, pp. 228-246. Jiang Jingning 蒋京宁, "Shuyinxia de yuyan -- Jingpai zuojia yanjiu zhi yi" 树荫下的语言——京派作家研究之一, *Wenxue pinglun* 文学评论, No. 4, 1988, pp. 91-99. However, the nature and constituents of the Jingpai school are still at issue and for the moment I would prefer to reserve judgement on Fei Ming's connections to it, while acknowledging that he shares certain affinities with some members of the school.

<sup>200</sup>Fei Ming, "Di shiyi zhang yitian de shiqing" 第十一章 一天的事情 and "Di shiqi zhang Moxuyou xiansheng dongshou zhulun" 第十七章 莫须有先生动手著论 of "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后, in *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 624 and pp. 718-719.

<sup>201</sup>Fei Ming wrote: "Chun [his son] was born in Beiping in the autumn of the twenty fourth year of the Republic (=1935), and went to Huangmei in the autumn of the twenty fifth (=1936). Therefore, when he was old enough to remember things, his memories were those of Huangmei and his character is that of someone from Huangmei ..." (纯是民国二十四年秋天在北平生的, 二十五年秋天回黄梅, 所以他有记忆的时候是黄梅的记忆, 而且他的性格是一个道地的黄梅之子 ...) This indicates that Fei Ming's family left Peking in autumn 1936. See "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di jiu zhang Tingqian kanhui", *Fei Ming xuanji*, pp. 577-578. In *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 279, Guo Jifang also writes that Fei Ming made his family go back to Huangmei in 1936.

Beiheyang (北河沿甲十号, east of what is now called 'Honglou' 红楼)<sup>202</sup> with his wife, daughter and son<sup>203</sup>, suddenly made them go back to Huangmei, and for some time during 1936-1937, he lived in the Yonghegong (雍和宫).<sup>204</sup> He had his hair cut very short like a monk and spent time discussing profound philosophical issues with an extraordinary Lama monk. (剃成了和尚头, 住在雍和宫里面, 和一位不平常的喇嘛同处, 谈经说玄。)<sup>205</sup> Fei Ming often told friends such as Bian Zhilin and He Xi that he could sit in meditation and attain a perfect transcendental state, although he did not show them how.<sup>206</sup> An old friend of Fei Ming's, who had graduated from the same school in Hubei and become a monk, praised him for attaining such a state in a relatively short time and attributing it to his 'good practice of the Way' (道行).<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>202</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 1. Also, my interview with Bian Zhilin on 20 July 1988 in Peking. Fei Ming sometimes called this house in the city by the same name of the cottage where he lived in Xishan, 'Often-out Studio'. This is known from the fact that Fei Ming wrote 'Often-out Studio, Beijing dongcheng' 北平东城, 常出屋斋, at the end of "Qin xu", published in *Yuzhoufeng*, No. 37 (16 March 1937), for example. In today's map, Beiheyang 北河沿大街 is located near Di'anmen in Dongchengqu 东城区.

<sup>203</sup>Fei Ming's son, Feng Sichun (冯思纯) was born in Peking in 1935. See Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di jiu zhang, Tingqian kanhui", *Fei Ming xuanji*, pp. 577-578. Guo Jifang also writes that Fei Ming's son was born in 1935 in *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 233.

<sup>204</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Huai Fei Ming", *Yao Tang zawen*, p. 116. According to Guo Jifang's *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 280, while Fei Ming lived in the Yonghegong, he had a male servant called Ren (任师傅) look after his house at Beiheyang, and Ren was introduced to him by a monk at Yonghegong.

<sup>205</sup>Anon., "Fei Ming xiansheng zengcheng Ku Yu weng zhaopian ji duilian" 废名先生赠呈苦雨翁照片及对联, *Yuwen zazhi* 艺文杂志, Vol. 1, No. 5 (January 1943).

<sup>206</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 4 and He Xi, "Huai Fei Ming", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 3, 1987, p. 138.

<sup>207</sup>Anon., "Fei Ming huisaziru seruqingguo" 废名挥洒自如涩如青果, *Zhongguo xiandai sanwen yibai'ershijia zhaji, shangce* 中国现代散文一百二十家札记, 上册, ed. Zhang Yiying 张以英, Zhu Tianyin 诸天寅 and Wan Yanjie 完眼戒 (n.p.: Lijiang chubanshe, n.d.), p. 367.

On 7 July 1937, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident occurred, marking the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War. While many writers were fleeing to the South, Fei Ming remained in Peking. In mid-September, he was still living in the Yonghegong. Meanwhile, Fei Ming's scheduled Peking University course on essays was cancelled.<sup>208</sup> On a more personal level, Fei Ming's mother died.<sup>209</sup> All these incidents helped Fei Ming to make up his mind, and in the winter of 1937 Fei Ming went back to his hometown, Huangmei.

### After 1937

The latter half of Fei Ming's life was met again by continuous surges of political turmoils, and the drastic social changes left him rather barren in both quantity and quality of his creative writing.

During the Sino-Japanese War, Fei Ming lived in Huangmei with his family, moving house several times to escape the ravages of war. The first two years of his life after returning to Huangmei were especially hard financially<sup>210</sup>, until he took up a job as a teacher of Chinese and natural science at Tingguxiang Jinjiazhai Number Two

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<sup>208</sup>In "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di si zhang, buju" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后, 第四章 卜居, Fei Ming wrote: "Since he did not receive a letter of appointment of university lectureship in year twenty six of the Republic (c. 1937) ..." (他从二十六年大学讲师没有得到聘书以来 ...) See *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 503. See also Katō Sadao 加藤贞雄, "Hū Bunpei kenkyū nōto" 冯文炳研究) 一卜, *Ritsumeikan bungaku* 立命馆文学, Nos. 430, 431 432 (June 1981), p. 375.

<sup>209</sup>Yu Pingbo's letter to Hu Shi, dated 31 July 1946 in *Hu Shi laiwang shuxin xuan, xiace* 胡适来往书信选, 下册, ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo Zhonghua minguo shi yanjiushi 中国社会科学院近代史研究所中华民国史研究室 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p. 117.

<sup>210</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Shuo Fei Ming de shengping", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 2, 1984, p. 110.

Primary School (停古乡金家寨第二小学) in the autumn of 1939.<sup>211</sup> From spring 1940 until spring 1945, Fei Ming was a teacher of English at Huangmei Junior Middle School (黄梅县初级中学).

During the war, Fei Ming did not write stories but read *The Analects*, *Zhuangzi*, Tang dynasty literature and modern Chinese literature.<sup>212</sup> He kept up his correspondence with Zhou Zuoren in Peking until around 1940 when communication became difficult.<sup>213</sup> Even after correspondence was nearly cut off, Zhou Zuoren, still in Peking, published several articles in which he mentioned Fei Ming.<sup>214</sup> In November 1944, a collection of Fei Ming's critical essays, *On New Poetry* was published by Zhou Zuoren, Yu Pingbo, and Huang Yu (黄雨) who had been Fei Ming's student and who had kept the draft while Fei Ming was in Huangmei.<sup>215</sup> Also in 1944, sixteen of Fei Ming's poems were collected and published in *Waterside*, which also contained poems by his old friend, Kai Yuan (开元 = Shen Qiwu). As a preface, Kai Yuan wrote a poem entitled "Remembering Fei Ming" ("Huai Fei Ming" 怀废名) in which he addressed Fei Ming as "the spiritually enlightened" (悟道者). In May 1945, a collection of Fei

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<sup>211</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Bianhouji", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 446. Also, Fei Ming, "Huangmei Chuji Zhongxue tongxuelu xu sanpian", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 382.

<sup>212</sup>Interview with Feng Jiannan on 24 July 1988 in Shijiazhuang.

<sup>213</sup>Zhou Zuoren wrote in March 1943 that communication with Fei Ming had become gradually more difficult and that he thought Fei Ming was still teaching at a primary school in Huangmei. See "Huai Fei Ming", *Yao Tang zawen*, p. 117. According to Fei Ming's essay, "Huangmei Chuji zhongxue tongxuelu xu sanpian", collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 382, Fei Ming began teaching at a junior middle school in 1940 after working as a primary school.

<sup>214</sup>For example, the article, "Huai Fei Ming" written in 1943 and collected in *Yao Tang zawen* (Beijing: Xinmin yinshuguan, 1944).

<sup>215</sup>Chen Zhenguo, "Jianping Fei Ming shilun" 简评废名诗论, *Jiangsu jiaoyu xueyuan jianbao* 江苏教育学院简报, No. 3, 1988, pp. 65-66.

Ming's poems and essays, *Invitation to Hermitism* (*Zhaoyinji* 招隱集) was edited by Kai Yuan and published.

Fei Ming's interest in Chinese philosophy continued during the war. In spring 1942, after reading *New Doctrine of Consciousness-Only* (*Xin weishi lun* 新唯识论)<sup>216</sup> by Xiong Shili which had been sent to him by Xiong himself, Fei Ming thought of writing a thesis which opposed Xiong's theory.<sup>217</sup> In winter 1942, Fei Ming started to write

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<sup>216</sup>Xiong Shili's thesis, *New Doctrine of Consciousness-Only* is in three parts. The first deals with consciousness and transformation, the second with function, and the third with mind and matter. The first two parts were in classical Chinese and printed for private circulation in 1932. They were translated into colloquial Chinese and published in 1942. This 1942 version with the first and second parts is what Fei Ming read. (See Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiqi zhang, Moxuyou xiansheng dongshou zhulun", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 719.) Later the third part was added and the whole book was published in Chongqing in 1944 and again in Shanghai in 1947, both in one volume. In the same year, it was published in four volumes in Shanghai as part of *Xiong Shili Collection*, 1947. See Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 763.

<sup>217</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiqi zhang Moxuyou xiansheng dongshou zhulun", *Fei Ming xuanji*, pp. 718-719. According to Wing-tsit Chan, the central thesis of Xiong's *New Doctrine of Consciousness-Only* is that: "reality is perpetual transformation, consisting of 'closing' and 'opening' which are a process of unceasing production and reproduction. The 'original substance' is in perpetual transition at every instant, arising anew again and again, thus resulting in many manifestations. But reality and manifestation, or substance and function, are one. In its 'closing' aspect, it is the tendency to integrate - the result of which may 'temporarily' be called matter - while in its 'opening' aspect it is the tendency to maintain its own nature and be its own master - the result of which may 'temporarily' be called mind. This mind itself is one part of the 'original mind', which in its various aspects is mind, will, and consciousness." As Fei Ming's thesis, "On Ālayavijñāna" regrettably remains unpublished and is not available, the difference between the views of Fei Ming and Xiong Shili can only be guessed at. Again, according to Wing-tsit Chan, "Xiong at first followed the Buddhist school of Consciousness-Only. Later he became dissatisfied, turned to Neo-Confucianism, criticized, synthesized, and transformed both, and borrowed elements from Western philosophy to constitute his 'New Consciousness-Only Doctrine.' As he has emphasized, the word 'consciousness' here means not the mind or *ālaya* (storehouse) as in the Consciousness-Only School which evolves an apparent world but the original mind or the original substance of all existence, and the word 'only' means 'especially.'" See Wing-tsit Chan, "The New Idealistic Confucianism: Hsiung Shih-li", *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 763-765. Considering the title of Fei Ming's thesis, a superficial speculation as to its contents would be: that Fei Ming conceived the word "consciousness" as "*alaya*"

this thesis, "On Ālayavijñā-ñā" ("Alaiyesi lun" 阿赖耶识论).<sup>218</sup> Towards the end of war, Fei Ming would sit cross-legged in meditation almost all day and wrote only on moral philosophy.<sup>219</sup>

After the end of war, Fei Ming's friends, such as Yang Zhensheng (杨振声, 1890-1956), Zhu Guangqian and Yu Pingbo<sup>220</sup> worked for Fei Ming to return to Peking University.<sup>221</sup> Their effort turned out to be successful and Fei Ming was appointed a lecturer<sup>222</sup> by Chancellor Hu Shi in the summer of 1946.

On the way to Peking from Huangmei, Fei Ming took a route via Nanjing, where he visited Zhou Zuoren who had been in Laohuqiao (老虎桥) prison after his arrest as a traitor and collaborator with the Japanese in 1945.<sup>223</sup> In spite of the nationwide criticism of Zhou, Fei Ming remained open about his friendship with him. He even gave Zhou financial help several times and spoke highly of him in public.<sup>224</sup> Such behaviour aroused repugnance in some people.<sup>225</sup>

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as in the Buddhist school of Consciousness-Only, which was perhaps incompatible with Xiong's view.

<sup>218</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiqi zhang Moxuyou xiansheng dongshou zhulun", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 719.

<sup>219</sup>Interview with Feng Jiannan on 24 July 1988 in Shijiazhuang.

<sup>220</sup>According to Guo Jifang's *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 307, Fei Ming had been in touch with Yu Pingbo during the war.

<sup>221</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming zai zhanhou de Beida" 废名在战后的北大, *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1990, p. 101. And Yu Pingbo's letter to Hu Shi dated 31 July 1946 in *Hu Shi laiwan shuxin xuan, xiace*, pp. 71-73.

<sup>222</sup>According to Guo Jifang's *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 304, Fei Ming was appointed as an "associate professor".

<sup>223</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming zai zhanhou de Beida", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1990, p. 101. According to Feng Jiannan, this visit was made possible with the help of Fei Ming's friend, Ye Gongchao. Ye, who had been a professor of Peking University, was counsellor and concurrently director of European Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time.

<sup>224</sup>Ibid. See also, Long Shunyi 龙顺宜, "Zhi Tang laoren zai Nanjing" 知堂老人在南京, *Mingbao yuekan* 明报月刊, No. 207 (March 1983), p. 61, and *Zhou Zuoren nianpu*, p. 535. In his essay, "Jiaoxun" 教训, Fei Ming refers to Zhou Zuoren in prison as 'the learned multi-talented gentleman' (博学多能躬行君子). Also, in

Fei Ming's long-term relationship with Zhou Zuoren was to affect him very adversely politically in his later life.

From 1946 to 1952, Fei Ming taught *The Analects, Mencius*, the works of Tao Yuanming, Li Shangyin and Yu Xin (庾信, 513-581), composition and other classes. According to Professor Chen Yixin (陈贻焯) of Peking University, who was Fei Ming's student, Fei Ming was slim and 'peculiar', looking like an arhat with very short hair and no eyebrows, and usually wearing a long Chinese gown (长袍).<sup>226</sup> He stated in composition class that literary works should flow naturally from one's own mind and should not be constructed artificially. He discussed his students' composition with Yang Zhensheng and Shen Congwen who were also teaching at Peking University. In his poetry reading class, Fei Ming emphasised his own subjective impressions rather than giving logical explanations.<sup>227</sup>

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Chapter Eleven of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", Fei Ming defends Zhou, who was charged with being a "traitor to China", ("hanjian" 汉奸) at some length. See Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiyi zhang, yitian de shiqing", *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (April 1948), pp. 32-34. This part of Chapter Eleven is omitted, perhaps for political reasons, in the 1988 version in *Fei Ming xuanji*.

<sup>225</sup>For example, see Huang Bosi 黄伯思, "Guanyu Fei Ming" 关于废名, *Wenyi chunqiu fukan* 文艺春秋副刊, Vol. 1, No. 3 (March 1947), p. 10.

<sup>226</sup>According to my interview on 27 July 1988 in Peking, Professor Chen Yixin of Peking University, who was Fei Ming's student (1947-1951), stated that among lecturers at Peking University at the time, there were three who looked like an 'arhat' with shaven hair: Fei Ming, Zhou Zuoren and Yu Pingbo. Gao Xiang 高翔 also wrote that Fei Ming looked like a priest at Peking University after the war in his essay, "Ji Fei Ming he Xu Ying" 记废名和徐盈, *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao*, pp. 65-67.

<sup>227</sup>Interview with Professor Chen Yixin on 27 July 1988 in Peking. For instance, Fei Ming read lines from Li Shangyin's poem, "Die" 蝶, No. 2; "On the green jade hairpin is a pattern of a phoenix; for whom does the fragrant neck turn?" (为问翠钗钗上凤, 不知香颈为谁回) aloud twice without giving any explanation of it, saying "Good, good!" (好啊, 好啊). Professor Chen asked him, "Mr Feng, what is so good about it?" (冯先生, 这什么好啊?) but Fei Ming did not answer directly and just replied, "You are naive." (你纯正啊。) Fei Ming read the phrase again twice. Fei Ming once showed Professor Chen his poem:

In Peking, Fei Ming, who claimed to be a 'philosopher and no longer a writer' (当我已经是一个哲学家的时候——即是说连文学家都不是了)<sup>228</sup>, was not very sociable and sat in meditation every morning and evening. The pastoral story writer of the 1930s, Shen Congwen was sympathetic towards Fei Ming's internal loneliness and often went to see him. Fei Ming suggested to Shen, who was also reading Buddhist sutras at this time, that they learn the 'Way' together.<sup>229</sup> Fei Ming also talked with his colleagues<sup>230</sup> and old friends such as Bian Zhilin<sup>231</sup> about his thesis on an interpretation of the Buddhist scripture, "On Ālayavijñāna". With Xiong Shili, who was professor of philosophy at the same university, Fei Ming still often discussed the 'Way', as they had done before the war.<sup>232</sup> However, Fei Ming remained isolated at a personal level, as Shen, Bian and many others

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Walking on a street  
There was a postbox standing alone.  
P.O.  
P.O.  
P.O.

走上街头。  
有邮筒独立。  
P.O.  
P.O.  
P.O.

Professor Chen asked him what it meant. Fei Ming explained that the letters P.O. which became bigger line by line meant that he was walking closer and closer to the postbox. During the interview, Professor Chen also said that Fei Ming's personality was "unpretentious and honest" (真诚, 正直) and somewhat "childlike" (象小孩样的).

<sup>228</sup>Fei Ming, "Jiaoxun", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 370.

<sup>229</sup>Ling Yu 凌宇, *Shen Congwen zhuan -- shengming zhi huo chang ming* 沈从文传——生命之火长明 (Beijing: Shiyue wenyi chubanshe, 1988), p. 404.

<sup>230</sup>Interview with Professor Yin Falu 阴法鲁 on 28 July 1988 in Peking. From 1946 to 1952, Professor Yin lived in the same compound (一个院子里) as Fei Ming.

<sup>231</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 5.

<sup>232</sup>Interview with Professor Yin Falu on 28 July 1988 in Peking.

could not share the same degree of interest in philosophy and were busy with their own work.<sup>233</sup>

From June 1947 to November 1948, Fei Ming published "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" ("Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后) serially in *Literary Magazine* (*Wenxue zazhi* 文学杂志). Fei Ming was no longer willing to write fiction and commented in an essay: "Now I only like facts and dislike imagination. If I write, I can only write essays and will never be able to write stories again." (我现在只喜欢事实, 不喜欢想像。如果要我写文章, 我只能写散文, 决不会再写小说。)<sup>234</sup> "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", which remains incomplete, was written at the request of Zhu Guangqian who was the editor of the magazine. In the work which describes Mr Maybe's life in wartime Huangmei, real place names and the names of real people such as Zhi Tang (知堂, one of Zhou Zuoren's pen-names), Xiong Shili, and Fei Ming's children appear. According to Fei Ming's nephew, Feng Jiannan, who lived in the same house with him for some time during the war, it is made up of 'essays recording actual events' (纪实散文).<sup>235</sup> However, it will be discussed as an autobiographical 'story' later in Chapter Seven of this thesis, since the fictional name, "Mr Maybe" is still used in it and also it was first published under the category of 'story' (小说) in *Literary Magazine*.

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<sup>233</sup>Information on Shen Congwen's relationship with Fei Ming was gathered during my interview, on 27 July 1988 in Peking, with Professor Lu Deshen 吕德甲 of Peking University who was Fei Ming's student (1946-1952). See also Jeffrey Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen* (California: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 265-269.

<sup>234</sup>Fei Ming, "Sanwen", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 366

<sup>235</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming zai zhanhou de Beida", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1990, p.104.

In 1949 when the People's Republic of China was established, Fei Ming remained a professor at Peking University. According to Fei Ming's colleague at the time, Professor Yin Falu, Fei Ming told him that the contents of the new books on revolutionary theory matched his future hopes and that he was very happy about the new society.<sup>236</sup> As materials about Fei Ming after 1949 are not only scarce but also often biased politically, it is hard to judge whether such words by him were genuinely meant and, if so, why his political view changed so dramatically.<sup>237</sup> Fei Ming's articles written after 1949 show a powerful Marxist influence, and Bian Zhilin describes Fei Ming's ideas at the time as: "somewhat to the point of being even more left than 'left'." (甚至有点从左到"左"了。) <sup>238</sup>

From October 1951 to May 1952, Fei Ming was assigned to a production team in Jiangxi province for thought reform. According to Professor Yue Daiyun (乐黛云) who was Fei Ming's student in the same production team, Fei Ming still defended Zhou Zuoren:

Often he would speak of his teacher Zhou Zuoren, the brother of China's most famous modern writer, Lu Xun. Head of the Ministry of Education under the Japanese puppet government,

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<sup>236</sup>Interview with Professor Yin Falu on 28 July 1988 in Peking. However, it is hard to judge whether or not this account should be taken literally because of the political situation in the People's Republic of China. Apart from the direct, straight interpretation (that Fei Ming genuinely felt this), there are some other possibilities: for example that Fei Ming said this in order to show his own political 'correctness', or even that Professor Yin was protecting Fei Ming's political position, and so on.

<sup>237</sup>In Chapter Fifteen of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", Fei Ming expressed his anger at the Chinese Communist Party which burned his favourite Wuzu Temple in 1927 and criticized them. See Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di shiwu zhang, Wuzusi", *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (September 1948), pp. 35-37. This part of Chapter Fifteen is omitted, again probably for political reasons, in the 1988 version in *Fei Ming xuanji*.

<sup>238</sup>Bian Zhilin, 'Xu', *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 5.

Zhou had been condemned as a collaborator and a traitor. Fei Ming always insisted, however, that Zhou's actions were motivated by a desire to protect Chinese education and preserve Chinese culture, even when that goal necessitated cooperation with the enemy. Human dilemmas are never clear-cut, Fei Ming would argue passionately, and they can never be judged simply.<sup>239</sup>

Although Fei Ming was seemingly influenced by Marxism, his personal feelings for his old teacher were obviously unchanged. After this, Fei Ming had become half-blind after suffering a detached retina in his right eye, which was only the beginning of his 'tragic' later years.

In September 1952, Fei Ming was bitterly attacked as a 'bourgeois writer', dismissed from Peking University and sent to Dongbei Renmin (东北人民, now, Jilin 吉林) University.<sup>240</sup> He became Professor of Chinese there and lectured according to Mao Zedong's literary line on Lu Xun's stories, the poems of Du Fu, New Folk Songs (新民歌), New Aesthetics (新美学) and other subjects. Fei Ming seems to have tried (or perhaps he was-made to try) to be accepted in the

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<sup>239</sup>Yue Daiyun and Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm -- The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1985), p. 88.

<sup>240</sup>Yue and Wakeman, *To the Storm*, p. 88. According to Jin Xunmin's article, Fei Ming "volunteered to come to Dongbei Renmin University which was newly established in Changchun at that time" (志愿来到那时在长春新建的东北人民大学), "longing to contribute to the socialist literary undertakings" (怀着为社会主义文学事业多做贡献的愿望). However, the article seems to have been written in a desperate attempt to promote Fei Ming's political position in the P.R.C.: it is full of praises of Fei Ming's self-critical writings after 1949 and negative comments on his literary activities before 1949. For instance, Jin writes 'positively' with an exclamation mark: "In the latter half of his life, especially his later years, Mr Feng Wenbing really woke up from his pursuit of an obscure dreamland!" (冯文炳先生的后半生, 尤其是他的晚年, 却真的从朦胧的幻境的追求中醒来了!) See Jin Xunmin 金训敏, "Buduan jinqu, yousuo zuowei -- huainian Feng Wenbing xiansheng" 不断进取, 有所作为 -- 怀念冯文炳先生, *Jilin daxue shehui kexue xuebao* 吉林大学社会科学学报, 1982, No. 6, pp. 51-55.

new Communist society. He wrote several political essays and academic articles on his lecturing subjects which contained self-criticism and expressed his obedience to the Chinese Communist Party. For instance, in his essay, "Gratitude and Joy" ("Ganxie yu xiyue" 感谢与喜悦) published in 1956<sup>241</sup>, Fei Ming indirectly referred to his article "Digression" ("Xianhua" 闲话) published in *Camel Grass* in 1930 under the pseudonym of Ding Wu<sup>242</sup>, and regretted his criticism of Lu Xun.

During the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 onwards, in spite of these gestures, Fei Ming was bitterly attacked<sup>243</sup> and forced to stop teaching students. Instead, he was assigned to editing books at the university until 1962.<sup>244</sup> Meanwhile Fei Ming kept publishing propagandist essays which expressed his agreement with the party political line such as "The Party Must Lead Literature and Art" ("Bixu dang lingdao wenyi" 必须党领导文艺)<sup>245</sup> and "Decadent Bourgeois Literary Thoughts and the Great Orientation Towards Workers, Peasants and Soldiers" ("Fuxiu de zichanjieji wenyisixiang, weida de gongnongbing fangxiang" 腐朽的资产阶级文艺思想, 伟大的工农兵方向).<sup>246</sup> Such efforts seem to have been acknowledged, to some extent. In November 1957, *Selected Stories of Fei Ming (Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan*

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<sup>241</sup>Published in *Renmin ribao* dated 15 October 1956 and collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 388-390.

<sup>242</sup>See page 53 of this chapter, above.

<sup>243</sup>Chen Di 陈隄, "Dongbei renmin daxue wenxue jiaoxue zhong de zichan jieji guandian" 东北人民大学文学教学中的资产阶级观点, *Wenyibao* 文艺报, No. 15 (11 August 1958), pp. 17-18.

<sup>244</sup>Interview on 27 July 1988 in Peking with Mr Gao Changyin 高长印 of the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, who was Fei Ming's student at Jilin University.

<sup>245</sup>*Jilin ribao*, 10 August 1957.

<sup>246</sup>*Jilin ribao*, 28 December 1957.

废名小说选) was published.<sup>247</sup> Also in 1957, his book, *Talking with the Young about Lu Xun* (*Gen qingnian tan Lu Xun* 跟青年谈鲁迅) was published.<sup>248</sup> Again, it is hard to say whether Fei Ming truly re-evaluated Lu Xun's works in a literary sense or not. As he had to insert many words of regret for his own literary views in the 1920s and 1930s in his discussion of Lu Xun's stories, this book about the idol of the Chinese Communist Party should perhaps be taken as a token of his political effort to be accepted.

In March 1962, Premier Zhou Enlai (周恩来, 1898-1976) made his "Report on the Issue of Intellectuals" ("Guanyu zhishi fenzi wenti de baogao" 关于知识分子问题的报告) in Guangzhou, a speech criticising the 'leftist' tendency after 1957 in which he confirmed that most intellectuals already had the viewpoint of intellectual labourers. Vice Premier Chen Yi (陈毅, 1901-1972) supported Zhou's view and suggested that the label, 'bourgeois intellectuals', be removed and be replaced with the 'crown of the intellectual labourers'.<sup>249</sup> Consequently, the head of Jilin University had a reconciliatory talk with Fei Ming<sup>250</sup>, and in 1962, Fei Ming started to lecture again. In 1963, after prolonged struggle and effort since 'liberation', Fei Ming was elected Vice-President of the Literary Association of Jilin

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<sup>247</sup>Published by Renmin wenzue chubanshe in Peking.

<sup>248</sup>Feng Wenbing, *Gen qingnian tan Lu Xun* (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1957).

<sup>249</sup>Merle Goldman, "The Party and the intellectuals: phase two", *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 14, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 434-436. See also, *Zhongguo gongchandang liushinian de dashi jianjie* 中国共产党六十年的大事简介, ed. Zhengzhi xueyuan Zhonggongdang shi jiaoyanshi 政治学院中共党史教研室 (Beijing: Guofang daxue chubanshe, 1985), p. 505.

<sup>250</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Shuo Fei Ming de shengping", *Xin wenzue shiliao*, No. 2, 1984, p. 112.

Province (吉林省文联副主席), representative of The Fourth People's Congress of Jilin Province (吉林省第四届人民代表大会代表), and a member of the Standing Committee of the Jilin Political Consultative Conference (吉林省政协常委).

In 1966, the Cultural Revolution started. Fei Ming had been suffering from cancer and an eye disease, had had three operations<sup>251</sup>, and was in the Beijing Fandi Hospital (北京反帝医院) until December 1966. Yet serious illness would not shelter Fei Ming from being attacked again.

On 7 October 1967 Fei Ming died in Changchun. The cause of his death is not clear, although he is said to have died of a cancer relapse.<sup>252</sup> Professor Yue Daiyun later wrote about his death as follows:

Now his ashes lay somewhere in far-off Changchun. In the Cultural Revolution he had been bitterly attacked as a "reactionary academic authority" who had defended traitors like Zhou Zuoren, and he had died alone and neglected -- some said of hunger, since he was nearly blind and could not purchase food without assistance.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>251</sup>Feng Zhici 冯止慈, "Zhuyi fuqin" 追忆父亲, *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi chubanshe, 1990), pp. 68-69.

<sup>252</sup>Chen Zhenguo, "Fei Ming zhuanlüe" 废名传略, *Wenjiao ziliao jianbao*, No. 137 (May 1983), p. 44. Also, Feng Jiannan, "Bianhouji", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 466.

<sup>253</sup>Yue and Wakeman, *To the Storm*, p. 384. On the other hand, Guo Jifang states that Fei Ming was not criticized at all in *dazibao* (大字报 big-character posters) during the Cultural Revolution, partially because he was ill but partially because his students thought that he was "too good" (太好了). Guo's source for this information is unclear. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, p. 358.

Fei Ming lived his life in his own individual, whimsical 'style', at least for the first forty five years or so, although the 'story' or 'destiny' of his later years is tragic. And now, moving onto the main focus of the present thesis, what about Fei Ming's 'fictional' stories? The next chapter will summarize the general characteristics of Fei Ming's literary works including stories, essays and poems. This would perhaps help us see how his stories about the countryside fit in with his other works and with his reaction to life in urban, modernising China.

## Chapter Two

### Fei Ming's Creative Writings

From the previous chapter, it is known that until his death, Fei Ming engaged in work related to literature, whatever form it might be: teaching, editing books or writing propagandistic articles on "literature". However, the period of Fei Ming's "creative writing"<sup>1</sup> must be located solely between the years 1922 and 1948. This chapter will briefly describe the general characteristics of Fei Ming's works including his stories, poems and essays which were written during this "creative" period.

It was with some New poems that Fei Ming made his debut as a writer in 1922. "A Child" ("Xiaohai" 小孩)<sup>2</sup>, one of the first poems, published in 1922, is a short free verse with irregular line length and no rhyme, written in vernacular Chinese. So is another poem, published in 1923, "The Son of a Rickshaw Man" ("Yangchefu de erzi" 洋车夫的儿子).<sup>3</sup> Although they seem very naive and fairly mediocre for readers in the 1990s, they would have struck their contemporary audience as fresh and filled with spontaneous spirit. In the latter poem which is constructed as a dialogue between a son and his father, the rickshaw man, the sadness and hardship of the life of the

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<sup>1</sup>In this chapter, the word "creative writing" is used to mean writing original fiction, poems and essays at free will, as opposed to writing propagandistic or academic papers under a political guideline in the 1950s and 60s.

<sup>2</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Xiaohai", [first published in *Nuli zhoubao*, No. 23 (8 October 1922)], collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 287.

<sup>3</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Yangchefu de erzi", [first published in *Shi* 诗, Vol. 2 (May 1923)], collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 283.

lowly is suggested. Such attention to the life of the socially marginal can also be seen in some of his stories about the countryside. After the publication of these verses, his poetry writing did not bloom fully until the early 1930s.

The predominant genre that concerned Fei Ming in the 1920s was fiction. His early short stories, written between 1922 and 1925, can be divided, on the whole, into three types. The first type is about the first person narrator's journey from his hometown in the South to Peking. Examples include "A Letter"<sup>4</sup> and "My Heart".<sup>5</sup> They describe the narrator's loneliness in leaving the familiar world of his hometown and anxiety about plunging into a new life in a strange city.

The second type focuses on the vexed feelings of the main character who is originally from the countryside and lives in a city (often Peking). This type of stories include "Long Days", "The Disappearance of the Young Man Ruan Ren"<sup>6</sup> and "To My Friend, J. T.". In these stories, Fei Ming describes the main character's disappointment with his student life in a city, and his sense of alienation. In "The Disappearance of the Young Man Ruan Ren" and "To My Friend, J. T.", the main characters, Ruan Ren and the first person narrator respectively, express an urge to escape from their current situations which have turned out to be different from their previous expectations. (Ruan Ren actually leaves Peking and disappears.)

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<sup>4</sup>See Chapter One, p. 28, footnote 60 of this thesis.

<sup>5</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Wo de xin", *Nuli zhoubao*, No. 46 (1 April 1923). See Chapter One, p. 28 of this thesis.

<sup>6</sup>See Chapter One, pp. 27-28 of this thesis.

In these two types of stories, Fei Ming, like many other writers of the May Fourth decade, often employs the confessional mode through the first person narrative in epistolary form.<sup>7</sup> For instance, in "A Letter", "The Disappearance of the Young Man Ruan Ren" and "To My Friend, J. T.", the narrator's internal conflict is related directly to readers in the form of the main character's letter(s) to his close relative(s) or friend. The main characters in them often express the feeling of being a misfit in an unfamiliar, materialistic and diverse urban society. Yet, as young, intellectually aspiring individuals, these characters cannot go straight back to their old life style within the traditional large family system, although loneliness makes them homesick. Such a dilemma is most explicit in the protagonist's letters in "The Disappearance of the Young Man Ruan Ren". He writes in his letters to his wife that:

I cannot get used to the life here, it's even worse than not being used to life in my hometown ... I haven't found a method of leading the most natural and reasonable life in this world, so how can I gain weight? If I live at home, where can I go and find the method of leading the most natural and reasonable life

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<sup>7</sup>Yi-tsi M. Feuerwerker points out: "The fictional 'I-narrator' (whose degree of identification with the author can vary widely) in diaries, letters, or other types of narrative, was introduced into Chinese literature through the inspiration of Western models, such as the extremely popular translation of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. It quickly became one of the most significant and characteristic new phenomena among the writers of the May Fourth decades." See Feuerwerker, "The Changing Relationship Between Literature and Life: Aspects of the Writer's Role in Ding Ling", *Modern Literature in the May Fourth Era*, ed. Merle Goldman (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 291. See also Leo Ou-fan Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 262-263. The Chinese translation of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (*Shaonian Weichi zhi fannao* 少年維持之煩惱) was by Guo Moruo and published in April 1922. Examples of other fiction of the 1920s in epistolary form include "Huoren de bei'ai" 或人的悲哀 by Huang Luyin (黃廬隱 1898-1934).

in this world? ... But my parents are both there like this, what shall we do? Would they let the two of us go away by ourselves? ... Therefore I only have one method -- running away on my own.

我过不惯这里的生活，比过不惯乡里的生活更利害。... 我没有得着最自然最合理的活在这世间的方法，怎肥胖得起来？住在家里，叫我到什么地方去找最自然最合理的活在这世间的方法？... 但是这样两亲俱在，怎么办呢？他们允许我俩单独去吗？... 所以我只有一个方法——自己逃走。<sup>8</sup>

The passage suggests Ruan Ren's desperate situation in which he cannot be satisfied with his life either in a modern city or in his more traditional hometown. Ruan Ren's letter to his parents reflects his increasing awareness that he is different from the mundane crowd. He writes:

Since I began to live in Peking, not a single day has been happy. At the beginning, I still intended to get along with it, but as I thought carefully, I felt it too unsafe. The longer I lived, the more arrogant I became. The more arrogant I became, the thinner and more pallid I became; The more I read, the worse I get on with the common people; the worse I get on with the common people, the less food to eat I have ...  
住京以来没有一天快乐。起初还打算就是这样混下去，仔细一想，觉得这太不稳妥：越住越骄傲，越骄傲越憔悴；越读书越与世人不相容，越与世人不相容越没有饭吃 ...<sup>9</sup>

The idea of self-importance and self-discovery which crosses Fei Ming's characters' mind is in fact, one of the heavily used themes in Chinese literature of the 1920s. Ruan Ren's words and action come close to, in Leo Lee's terms, the "romantic pose of a genius misunderstood or unreceived", which probably corresponds to the

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<sup>8</sup>Fei Ming, "Shaonian Ruan Ren de shizong", *Zhulin de gushi* (Beijing: Beixin shuju, 1925), pp. 39-40.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

author's "gesture of self-deception in order to ease the anxieties over his alienated existence".<sup>10</sup>

The third type of fiction contains the short stories about the peaceful life in the countryside in Southern China, which occupy the majority of his first collection, *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove*. (For convenience, his stories about the countryside shall henceforth be called 'country stories'.)<sup>11</sup> These will be analysed in detail in Chapters Three, Four and Seven.

One common feature of these three types of early short stories is that they contain many autobiographical elements. The first person narrator in "My Heart", "To My Friend J. T." and four country stories (to be discussed in the next chapter) has the same infant name, "Yan" (焱)<sup>12</sup>, and shares very similar geographical settings, family

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<sup>10</sup>Leo Ou-fan Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*, p. 252. According to Lee (pp. 250-251), the typical modern literati (="[wenren]" in Lee's term) is alienated from political power, and being alienated, he considers himself different from the mundane crowd. He (=the modern literati) searches within, indulges in self-pity, and assumes an inflated posture of self-importance which he glorifies in his autobiographical works. His rationale for this narcissistic pose is, in other words, not socio-political but romantic: a literati in early twentieth-century China feels himself different because he is more "capable of heightened emotional responses than are ordinary men."

<sup>11</sup>They will be discussed as "pastoral stories" in Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>12</sup>Fei Ming seems to have been inclined to identify his 'spirit' with 'fire'. Apart from naming his first person characters "Yan" (of which character consists of three 'fire's), in the satirical short stories published in 1927, "A Trial" ("Shenpan" 审判: first published entitled "Shi xiaoshuo" 是小说 in *Yu Si*, No. 127 on 16 April 1927, and renamed when it was collected in *Taoyuan*) and "The Mourning Ceremony" ("Zhuidaohui" 追悼会: written in March 1927, published in *Yu Si*, No. 130 on 7 May 1927, and first collected in *Taoyuan*), Fei Ming used his other pen-name, Binghuo (病火 'Sick Fire'). This probably symbolised his recognition of his own mental affliction and dissatisfaction with society. These stories describe the city-dwelling intellectual narrator's pessimistic view of Chinese society, which echoes Fei Ming's own misanthropy expressed in his short poems written in 1926. Also in "The Disappearance of the Young Man Ruan Ren", Ruan Ren writes: "As for me, fire is burning in my heart. I think: if there is someone, just one is all right, whose heart is burnt by fire like mine, I would hold that person without talking or crying, and just keep our two hearts really close together -- then we would both be so warm

background and experience with Fei Ming himself.<sup>13</sup> Also, a number of his third person stories are based upon the people and places he

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that we could not feel the scalding." (我呢，火烧在我的心里罢了。我想，倘若有人，就是一个也好，同我一样心里被火烧着，我将拥抱着他，也不讲话，也不流泪，只把我俩的心紧紧贴着，——我们彼此都是热的，感不着烫。) In his note attached to "Wuti zhi er" 无题之二 published in *Yu Si*, No. 16 (26 April 1926), Fei Ming commented that a man with a name like 'Wenbing' (文炳 -- of which the latter character, 'bing' 炳 includes 'fire' 火) often 'lacks fire' (缺火), suggesting one of the reasons why he did not like his real name. It is possible that Fei Ming identified 'spirit' with 'fire', partially because his view of writing was influenced by *Symbols of Agony* (*Kumon no shōchō* 苦悶の象徴) which will be discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis. In annotating Baudelaire's "Windows", Kuriyagawa Hakuson 厨川白村 wrote in his book, *Symbols of Agony*: "What a writer describes is a symbol. Therefore, depending on the feeling this symbol engraves on his mind, the reader lights a fire in his internal life and burns by himself." (In Lu Xun's Chinese translation, "作家所描写的事象是象征，所以凭了这象征所得的铭感，读者就点火在自己的内底生命上，自行燃烧起来。") See Lu Xun trans, *Symbols of Agony* (*Kumen de xiangzheng* 苦悶的象征) (Beixin shuju, 1928), p. 62. Fei Ming also writes in Chapter Seventeen of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane": "What's burning is a beautiful fire, symbolizing life." (烧着便是美丽的火，象征着生命。) See *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 709. It is also possible to see a Buddhist influence on Fei Ming here. In explaining how the idea of selflessness (无我) and that of samsara (transmigration 轮回) are compatible, the Buddhist priest, Nagasena compared 'self' to a 'flame'. He stated: that a flame is changing constantly. A flame in the evening and a flame at night are not the same. A flame at night and a flame in the morning are not the same. In the same way, there is no perpetual 'self'. And yet, the flame is the same flame of a light. The flame in the evening is like 'self' in this world, and the flame at night is like 'self' in the next world. See Sadakata Akira 定方晟, *Shumisen to gokuraku -- bukyō no uchūkan* 须弥山と極樂——仏教の宇宙 (Tokyo: Kōdansha gendai shinsho, 1973, rpt. 1987), p. 130. Fei Ming wrote in his essay, "Shu yu chaihūo" 树与柴火: "Last night's stars and this morning's dew are both life of fire. After all, everything is void", (昨夜星辰，今朝露水，都是火之生平了。终于又是虚空。) See *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 381. Incidentally, according to *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols*, in Buddhism, light stands for illumination and knowledge. See Wolfram Eberhard, *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols -- Hidden Symbols in Chinese Life and Thought*, trans. G. L. Campbell (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 159-160. On the other hand, Fei Ming seems to use the image of 'a lamp' to suggest 'spirit' in his poems such as "Siyue ershibari huanghun" 四月二十八日黄昏 (collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 301), "Xue de yuanye" 雪的原野 (collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 304), "Deng" 灯 (collected in *Shuibian, Zhaoyinji* and *Feng Wenbing xuanji*) and "Yuzhou de yishang" 宇宙的衣裳 [written on 1 April 1937, published in *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol.1, No.2 (1 June 1937) and later collected in *Shuibian, Zhaoyinji* and *Feng Wenbing xuanji*]. Overall, Fei Ming seems to have been attracted to these similar images of 'fire', 'flame' and 'lamp' in a particular way.

<sup>13</sup>Although not exactly within the category of the three types which I mentioned, the short story, "Little Sister" ("A mei" 阿妹) written in 1923 is also related by the first person narrator whose infant name is Yan. According to

knew in his real life.<sup>14</sup> As Paul John Eakin suggests, autobiographical writing is a process of self-discovery or identity formation, and a self-conscious act of self-creation.<sup>15</sup> It seems that from the very beginning of his fiction writing career, Fei Ming, like many other Chinese subjectivist writers of the 1920s, was concerned with this problematic relationship between self and the world beyond the self.<sup>16</sup>

The seven years after the publication of *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove* in October 1925 saw the height of Fei Ming's creative energy. The publication of all the remaining four books of his fiction: *The Peach Orchard* (1928), *Jujubes* (1931), *The Bridge* (1932) and *The Life of Mr Maybe* (1932), is concentrated during this period. It can

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Feng Jiannan, it is autobiographical and about Fei Ming's little sister. See Chapter One, p. 16, footnote 7 of this thesis.

<sup>14</sup>See Chapter One, pp. 19-20.

<sup>15</sup>See Paul John Eakin, *Fictions In Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985). See also Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960). James Olney, "Autobiography and the Cultural Movement: A Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographical Introduction", *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 3-27. Louis A. Renza, "The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography", *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney, pp. 268-295.

<sup>16</sup>Leo Lee explains the background of the change of focus from the state to society and the problem of identity among the modern literati of the May Fourth era in his book, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers* (pp. 247-253). According to Lee, many modern Chinese intellectuals were disillusioned by the muddle of warlord politics and alienated from political power. Unlike traditional Chinese intellectuals, they were deprived of the institutional channel -- whereby the intellectual's commitments to both state and society could be combined -- unless they wished to prostitute themselves to the indignities of the warlords. Being politically impotent, their focus was turned onto the problem of identity and alienation in society.

be described as a "Rebel and Recluse" phase<sup>17</sup> when he produced numerous satirical and country stories at the same time.<sup>18</sup>

In November 1925, immediately after publishing the first collection of his short stories, Fei Ming began writing his masterpiece, *The Bridge*, which was to be published, incomplete, seven years later. He also produced such exquisite short country stories as "The Peach Orchard" ("Taoyuan" 桃园) and "The Water-chestnut Marsh" ("Lingdang" 菱荡) in 1927. As shall be discussed in detail in Chapters Three and Four, the rustic characters in these short stories live in harmony with nature surrounding them. While Fei Ming expressed pessimistic feelings about China's chaotic society in his short poems in 1926,<sup>19</sup> conversely, his fictional characters do not suffer from the problematic relationship between self and the outside world. It would seem that he was trying to dissolve his dissatisfaction with society, or the discord between self and society within himself by temporarily immersing his imagination in creating the peaceful circumscribed world of somewhat 'selfless' characters in these stories.

Although his country and satirical stories are seemingly distinct and contradictory genres, on closer examination, the satirical short stories often express criticism of urban materialism and of the pursuit of modern sophistication, and can in fact be read as complementing the country stories. For instance, in "Mr and Mrs

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<sup>17</sup>See Chapter One, p. 47 of this thesis.

<sup>18</sup>See Chapter One, p. 48 of this thesis.

<sup>19</sup>See Chapter One, pp. 41-42 of this thesis.

Zhang" ("Zhang xiansheng yu Zhang taitai" 张先生与张太太)<sup>20</sup>, "Writers" ("Wenxuezhe" 文学者)<sup>21</sup>, "Midday" ("Shangwu" 晌午)<sup>22</sup> and "Professor Li" ("Li jiaoshou" 李教授)<sup>23</sup>, Fei Ming cynically depicts the hollow everyday life of egotistic intellectuals in a large city. Some of his other satirical short stories of the late 1920s were written under the influence of Chekhov.<sup>24</sup> Examples of this include "Little Fifth Herds

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<sup>20</sup>"Zhang xiansheng yu Zhang taitai" was written on 8 March 1927 and first published in *Yu Si*, No. 124 (25 March 1927). It was first collected in *Taoyuan*. The story presents the conflict between the city and country in his characters, Mr Zhang, an urbanized professor originally from the countryside and Mrs Zhang, an uneducated, unsophisticated traditional Southern provincial woman with bound feet. By satirizing Mr Zhang's 'boorish' efforts to assimilate to the city 'flair' and his vanity in comparing his wife with film stars photographed in Shanghai magazines, the narrator expresses his mistrust of the 'city civilization' and his contempt at its superficiality.

<sup>21</sup>"Wenxuezhe" was written on 1 April 1927 and first published in *Yu Si*, No. 127 (16 April 1927). It was later collected in *Taoyuan*. In the story, Fei Ming focuses on the empty life of two male university students who like to talk about a 'Chinese revolution' and what modern Chinese women should be like, but who are incapable of any action.

<sup>22</sup>"Shangwu" was written on 10 June 1927 and first published in *Yu Si*, No. 136 (18 June 1927). It was first collected in *Taoyuan*. In the story, the narrator acutely caricatures the main character, Mr Zhao (赵先生) who is a bored 'Epicurean' (快乐派) and the author of *Xing shenghuo* (性生活, *Sex Life*) by comparing him to a monkey. The narrator points his finger at the money-worshipping mentality which supports the dull life of Mr Zhao and his wife.

<sup>23</sup>"Li jiaoshou" was written on 28 November 1928 and first published in *Yu Si*, Vol. 4, No. 50 (24 December 1928). It was later collected in *Zao* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1931). In the story, the narrator jeers at the vanity and spiritual insipidity of an urbanized university lecturer, Li Fangzheng (李方正) who likes to be called 'Professor Li' and who considers himself to be a sophisticated, modern man.

<sup>24</sup>Fei Ming wrote in his preface to *Selected Stories of Fei Ming* in 1957: "From *Jujubes*, I selected 'Little Fifth Herds Cows', 'Mao'er's Daddy', 'Sihuo' and 'Wengong Temple'. I now think that the language in these stories is somewhat amazing and rare but they still express life, a little corner of life. I remember that at the time, I liked Chekhov's short stories very much. These stories of mine, especially 'Mao'er's Daddy', describe my observation of Chinese life after reading Chekhov's descriptions of Russian life." (在"枣"里我选了"小五放牛", "毛儿的爸爸", "四火", "文公庙", 这些短篇小说的语言我今天看来很有些惊异, 认为难得, 也表现了生活, 一个角落的生活。我记得我当时很爱契诃夫的短篇小说, 我的这些小说, 尤其是"毛儿的爸爸", 是读了契诃夫写的俄国的生活因而写我对中国生活的观察。) See Fei Ming, "Xu" 序, *Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan* (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1957), pp. 2-3. Mao'er's Daddy" ("Mao'er de baba" 毛儿的爸爸) was written on 31 October 1928, and first published in *Beixin* 北新, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1 May 1929) (which "Feng

Cows" ("Xiaowu fangniu" 小五放牛)<sup>25</sup>, "Sihuo" (四火)<sup>26</sup>, and "Wengong Temple" ("Wengong miao" 文公庙)<sup>27</sup>. In these three stories, in a

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Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao*, p. 360 omits.) It was first collected in *Zao*. It describes the monotonous everyday life of a provincial government officer's family, that is, Mao'er's family, in a small town. In the story, Fei Ming seems to concentrate on applying Chekhovian objective segmental descriptions, many insertions of almost trivial details and emphasis on conveying atmosphere. In fact, "Mao'er's Daddy" does not appear to be either particularly critical or satirical.

<sup>25</sup>"Xiaowu fangniu" was written on 10 November 1927 and first collected in *Zao*. In the story, dismal adult life is seen through the eyes of an innocent child, Little Fifth (小五). It describes the vulgarity of the three adults who live together: the poor, slow-witted, Uncle Chen (陈大爷), his fat, pompous, bound-footed wife, Ma Mao (毛妈妈), and the rich, silk-trousered butcher, Fat Wang (王胖子). Fei Ming describes the poor cowherd, Little Fifth's distaste for the greed and debauchery of Ma Mao and Fat Wang as well as their exploitative attitude towards him. As Jin Hongda 金宏达 points out in his article, "Fei Ming: cong chongdan, gubu dao huise, shenmi" 废名: 从冲淡, 古朴到晦涩, 神秘 [collected in *Zou xiang shijie wenxue* 走向世界文学, ed. Zeng Xiaoyi 曾小逸 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1985)], "Xiaowu fangniu" is reminiscent of Chekhov's short story, "Vanka", published in 1886. The story is narrated by the nine year old orphan, Vanka, who has been sent to Moscow as a shoemaker's apprentice. By describing the story from the point of view of an exploited little child at the bottom of society, both Fei Ming and Chekhov draw out the reader's sympathy for the child's situation. See Anton Tchekhov, "Vanka", *The Cook's Wedding And Other Stories*, trans. Constance Garnett (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922), pp. 87-94.

<sup>26</sup>The first half of the story was published in *Yu Si*, Vol. 4, No. 15 (9 April 1928), entitled "Weiwan" 未完. In 1930, "Weiwan" was revised and completed, and published in *Beixin*, Vol. 4, Nos. 1 and 2 (16 January 1930), entitled "Shilu" 实录, which Chen Zhenguo's "Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* (p. 360) omits. Later in 1932, when it was collected in *Zao*, the title was changed to "Huo" 火. When it was collected in *Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan* in 1957, the title was changed again to "Si Huo". The story describes the mentally paralysing process of the poor man, Wang Sihuo (王四火) who works as a pig-leg holder (捉脚) and odd-job-man in a butcher-shop. For Sihuo, life is a coarse dreary routine, and he always steals lard to 'get richer' (发财). One day, he is sacked and allows himself to be reduced to a loafer who no longer has any aspiration to improve his situation. (Supposing Fei Ming symbolises 'spirit' by 'fire' in this story as well, the title, "Sihuo" 四火 might also be taken as a pun for "Si huo" [死火 "Dead Spirit"].) Fei Ming adds rather discursive detailed descriptions of the different ways of selling meat and the appearances of the statues at the temple.

<sup>27</sup>First collected in *Zao*. The story is about the non-eventful life of villagers and centres around the teacher of a school at Wengong Temple, Mr Zhang the Seventh (张七先生). The narrator subtly criticizes the penetration of materialistic thoughts into the people's minds: towards the end of the story, the priest of the temple relates the episode of a woman in the community, called Mrs Wang the Second (王二家的), who tried to get a lost handkerchief from him by lying to him that it was hers. He then declaims: "Look, the people's hearts

manner similar to Chekhov<sup>28</sup>, Fei Ming describes monotonous everyday life of 'ordinary' people, paying attention to minute details which seem almost irrelevant to the storyline. On the whole, many of these satirical short stories assume more or less a reversed image of the country stories reflected in Fei Ming's misanthropic mirror. These two trends of stories converge in the novel, *The Life of Mr Maybe* at a deeper semantic level as "mock-pastoral"<sup>29</sup>, although superficially, it does appear as simply satirical and poles apart from the mild, meek country stories. As will be shown in the analysis in Chapter Six, Fei Ming's agonizing thoughts about self and society permeate the novel.

In the early 1930s, Fei Ming became very active as a poet.<sup>30</sup> His poems in the 1930s are totally different from his social-realistic poems of the early 1920s. Some of his poems written in 1931 show considerable similarities to his country stories in their use of imagery

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are so tainted nowadays. Fortunately, it was a handkerchief, not silver!" (你看如今的人心多么坏, 喜得是一条手巾不是银子!)

<sup>28</sup>Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan points out that Chekhov sometimes produces the effect of shock or irony by summing up briefly the central event and rendering trivial events in detail in his stories such as "Sleepy". See her *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York: Methuen, 1983), p. 56. Indeed in "Sleepy", Chekhov depicts "the shadows from the trousers and the baby-clothes and the green patch on the ceiling" again and again, while he skips the 'central event' of the story, that is, the scene in which the main character, Varka, strangled the baby she was nursing. See Anton Tchekhov, "Sleepy", *The Cook's Wedding And Other Stories*, trans. Constance Garnett, pp. 11-21. Ronald Hingley also writes: "Chekhov and Tolstoy both had a capacity, exceptional even among the greatest fiction-writers, for making a scene live by inserting some apparently unimportant and irrelevant detail." See his book, *Chekhov -- A Biographical and Critical Study* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1950), p. 200.

<sup>29</sup>This term and its application will be discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis.

<sup>30</sup>According to Chen Zhenguo, Fei Ming wrote about fifty poems in his life and only about thirty of them were published. See Chen Zhenguo, "Jianping Fei Ming shilun", *Jiangsu jiaoyu xueyuan jianbao*, No. 3, 1988, p. 66.

and motifs.<sup>31</sup> For example, his poem written in May 1931, "A Flowerpot" ("Huapen" 花盆) expresses melancholic, hermitic beauty by suggesting the mortality of the human being in contrast with the everlasting cycle of nature, in a manner similar to that of his country stories.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, he expresses his Daoist view of the harmony between the human being and nature.<sup>33</sup> Another clear example of a poem expressing a very similar motif to his country stories is "The Dressing-table" ("Zhuangtai" 妆台) which was also written in May 1931.<sup>34</sup> In this poem, he sublimates a feeling of

<sup>31</sup>Fei Ming's poem, "Meng de shizhe" 梦的使者 seems to embody his attitude towards his pastoral story-writing, and will be referred to in Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>32</sup>"Huapen" was written on 18 May 1931 and collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 297. The poem's first line is an allusion to a line in Xie Lingyun's (谢灵运, 385-433) poem, "Up In the Lakeside Tower" ("Deng chishang lou" 登池上楼). (Fei Ming alludes to this line also in the chapter, "Tea Shop" ["Chapu" 茶铺] of *The Bridge*.) "Huapen" goes:

By the pond spring grass is growing;  
Over the pond is a tree.  
The tree says:  
"I used to be a seed."  
The grass says:  
"We all are one life."  
The man who planted the tree comes walking,  
And says looking at the tree:  
"My tree has grown so tall,  
I wonder where my tomb will be?"  
He seems as if he was thinking of carrying a pot of flowers into his tomb.  
池塘生春草,  
池上一棵树,  
树言,  
"我以前是一颗种子。"  
草言,  
"我们都是一个生命。"  
植树的人走了来,  
看树道,  
"我的树真长得高, ——  
我不知那里将是我的墓?"  
他仿佛想将一钵花端进去。

<sup>33</sup>Fei Ming's description of the relationship between the human being and nature in his country stories will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.

sadness into an aspiration after female beauty.<sup>35</sup> According to Fei Ming himself, his philosophy in writing the novel, *The Bridge* was embodied in this poem.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, in *The Bridge*, as I shall discuss in the next chapter, he sanctifies the two main young female characters, Qinzi (琴子) and Xizhu (细竹), and describes them almost like fairy maidens.

After finishing the draft of *The Life of Mr Maybe* in autumn 1931, Fei Ming struggled to find a new direction for his fiction

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<sup>34</sup>"Zhuangtai" was written on 16 May 1931, published in *Wenxue jikan* 文学季刊, No. 1 (1 January 1934), and later collected in *Shuibian, Zhaoyinji* and *Feng Wenbing xuanji*. ("Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* omits this.)

<sup>35</sup>The poem goes:

In a dream I dreamt I was a mirror.  
Sinking down in the sea-deeps it still remains a mirror;  
If it were taken away by a girl,  
She would put it on her dressing-table.  
Because this is a dressing-table,  
Sorrows should not be here.

因为梦里梦见我是个镜子，  
沉在海里他将也是个镜子，  
一位女郎拾去，  
她将放上她的妆台。  
因为此地是妆台，  
不可有悲哀。

The English translation is taken from Harold Acton and Ch'en Shih-Hsiang, *Modern Chinese Poetry* (London: Duckworth, 1936), p. 60. In fact, Fei Ming employs a similar pattern of association of imagery using such objects as a mirror, the sea or water, and a flower or a woman in his poems written in 1931. For instance, in the poem, "Hai" 海 which was written on 12 May 1931, published in *Wenxue jikan*, No. 1 (1 January 1934) and later collected in *Shuibian, Zhaoyinji* and *Feng Wenbing xuanji* ("Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* omits this), Fei Ming associates the image of a flower with a woman and that of sea with love. Other examples of such poems include "Jing" 镜 written on 13 May 1931 and "Diandeng" 点灯 written on 16 May 1931. In the former, the combination of images is water, flowers (the Peach Blossom Spring), a woman and a mirror; and in the latter, a mirror and a flower. Incidentally, a mirror is an important symbol for the mind in Chan Buddhism. See Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 207 and p. 432.

<sup>36</sup>Fei Ming, *Tan xinshi*, pp. 218-219.

writing. Disturbed by the reputation that his works were obscure<sup>37</sup>, he tried to write a novel which would suit both refined and popular tastes, but it turned out to be abortive.<sup>38</sup> Judging from the prologue of this unfruitful novel, which is the only part ever published<sup>39</sup>, the novel was going to be in the style of traditional Chinese fiction. The prologue is narrated by the first person narrator who often makes digressive comments and refers to the supernatural. This first person narrator is introverted to the point that he seems almost self-obsessed. Because of this, the tempo of the prologue is slow and stagnant. He managed to publish, between 1932 and 1937, seven short sequels to *The Bridge*, which contain even more despondent, philosophical and abstract ideas than those in the previous chapters. However, the novel still remained incomplete. Finally, unable to develop a fresh theme, or a pellucid style, Fei Ming shifted the weight of his writing from fiction to essays and poems.

Some of Fei Ming's essays published in the mid 1930s were written for his friends such as Zhou Zuoren, Liang Yuchun and Yu Pingbo.<sup>40</sup> These essays express not only his friendship with them, but also his critical views on proletarian revolutionary literature at the time, as mentioned in Chapter One.<sup>41</sup> His other essays, especially the short pieces published in the supplement, *Bright Pearl of The*

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<sup>37</sup>See Chapter One, p. 56 of this thesis.

<sup>38</sup>See Chapter One, pp. 56-57 of this thesis.

<sup>39</sup>Fei Ming, "Fangzhiji", *Xinyue yuekan*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (1 March 1933), pp. 1-8.

<sup>40</sup>Examples are "Qiu Xin yizhu xu" (1933), "Mr Zhi Tang" (1934), "On Literary Factions" ("Guanyu paibie" 关于派别, published in *Renjianshi*, No. 26, 1935), and "The Forward to *Dream Encounter at the Old Scholartree*" ("Gu huai meng yu xiaoyin" 《古槐梦遇》小引, 1936, collected in *Yu Pingbo yanjiu ziliao* 俞平伯研究资料, ed. Sun Yurong 孙玉蓉). See also Chapter One, p. 50 and p. 54 of this thesis.

<sup>41</sup>See Chapter One, pp. 54-55 of this thesis.

*World Daily* in 1936, describe his own views about classical Chinese writings such as *The Analects*<sup>42</sup>, the poems of Tao Yuanming<sup>43</sup>, Yu Xin<sup>44</sup>, and Li Shangyin<sup>45</sup>, and Wen Tingyun.<sup>46</sup> They indicate his ability to draw out original ideas from his favourite works in traditional Chinese literature.

In his poems published between 1933 and 1937, his own theory of New poetry, which he articulated in his lectures at Peking University, is embodied. Fei Ming was against arranging metres in New poems and maintained his original view that: "if we want to distinguish our new poetry from the old we should make its content poetical and its language in prose." (新诗要别于旧诗而能成立，一定要这个

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<sup>42</sup>See for instance, "Confucian Writings" ("Kongmen zhi wen" 孔门之文) and "Chen Kang" (陈亢) in which Fei Ming praises the meaning and language in some passages [= Books XII-8, XIX-20, XVI-13 and I-10] in *The Analects* and deprecates Zhu Xi's (朱熹, 1130-1200) interpretation of them. Also, in "Like Bone Cut, Like Horn Polished" ("Ru qie ru cuo" 如切如磋), Fei Ming refers to the passages from *The Analects* [= Books I-15 and IV-5] and criticises Wang Yangming's (王阳明, 1472-1529) interpretation. "Chen Kang" and "Ruqie ru cuo" were first published in *Shijie ribao fukan, Mingzhu*, Nos. 20 (23 October 1936) and 21 (26 October 1936) respectively, and collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*.

<sup>43</sup>See "Tao Yuanming ai shu" and "Shenxian gushi (yi)" 神仙故事 (一). They were first published in *Shijie ribao fukan, Mingzhu*, Nos. 19 (20 October 1936) and 49 (18 November 1936) respectively, and collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*.

<sup>44</sup>See "San gan liang gan" 三竿两竿, "Zhongguo wenzhang", "Nüzi gushi" 女子故事 and "Shenxian gushi (yi)". "San gan liang gan", "Zhongguo wenzhang" and "Nüzi gushi" were first published in *Shijie ribao fukan, Mingzhu*, Nos. 15 (5 October 1936), 37 (6 November 1936) and 46 (15 November 1936) respectively, and collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*.

<sup>45</sup>See "Zhongguo wenzhang", "Nüzi gushi", "Shenxian gushi (yi)", "Shenxian gushi (er)" 神仙故事 (二) and "Fu de ji" 赋得鸡. "Shenxian gushi (er)" and "Fu de ji" were first published in *Shijie ribao fukan, Mingzhu*, Nos. 60 (29 November 1936) and 65 (5 December 1936) respectively, and collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*.

<sup>46</sup>See "Ying" 蝇 which was first published in *Shijie ribao fukan, Mingzhu*, No. 13 (1 October 1936), and collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*.

内容是诗的，其文字则要是散文的。)47 For instance, his poem written in 1936, "December the Nineteenth, Night" ("Shi'er yue shijiu ye" 十二月十九夜)48 has no metre or division of stanzas.49 Towards the late

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47 Fei Ming, "Xinshi wenda" 新诗问答 [first published in *Renjianshi*, No. 5 (5 November 1934)], *Tan xinshi*, p. 232.

48 "December the Nineteenth, Night" was published in *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (June 1937) and later collected in *Shuibian*, *Zhaoyinji* and *Feng Wenbing xuanji*. The poem goes:

A lamp late at night,  
Is like flowing water in high mountains,  
Like someone in the sea.  
The sky with stars is a forest with birds,  
Or flowers, or fish,  
Or a dream in the heavens;  
The sea is a mirror of the night.  
Thoughts are a beautiful woman,  
Or a home,  
Or the sun,  
Or the moon,  
Or a lamp,  
Or the flame of a stove,  
The flame of a stove is a shadow of a tree on the wall,  
Or the sound of a winter night.

深夜一枝灯，  
若高山流水，  
有身处之海。  
星之空是鸟林，  
是花，是鱼，  
是天上的梦，  
海是夜的镜子。  
思想是一个美人，  
是家，  
是日，  
是月，  
是灯，  
是炉火，  
炉火是墙上的树影，  
是冬夜的声音。

Here, Fei Ming expresses the quietude of a lonely, thoughtful winter night under the cool light of the lamp and with dark shadows on the wall. He uses his favorite images of the sea and the mirror in this poem as well. Fei Ming's illogical association of images in this poem reminds us of the Chan idea that: any alert mind will soon realize that conceptualization can never discover what the Buddha is and that one should return to one's spontaneous mental faculty to look for the answer oneself. Chan also teaches that everything in this world is a symbol of the truth (诸法无我). For Chan Buddhism, see Wing-tsit Chan, "The Zen (Ch'an) School of Sudden Enlightenment", *A Source Book in*

1930s, the world of Fei Ming's poems develops into a more and more surrealistic one<sup>50</sup>, and the Daoist/Chan Buddhist influence seems to become stronger.<sup>51</sup> In other words, Fei Ming often shows an extravagant flight of imagination, making associations between things which seem totally different and unrelated, as if suggesting

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*Chinese Philosophy*, p. 429. Matsuura Tsuneco 松浦恒雄 also discusses this poem and comments that by alluding to the story of Bo Ya 伯牙 and Zhong Ziqi's 钟子期 story in the second line ("若高山流水"), Fei Ming is suggesting that the 'lamp' in the first line is 'something which knows him well'. See his article, "Haimei no shi ni tsuite" 废名の诗について *Jinbun kenkyū*, Ōsaka shiritsu daigaku bungakubu, dai yonjūsan kan, dai jūichi bunsatsu 人文研究 大阪市立大学文学部 第四三卷 第11分册, 1991, p. 940. However, Matsuura's interpretation of Fei Ming's poetry is very different from mine: he does not mention the influence of Chan Buddhist ideas on Fei Ming at all. Jiang Chengyu 蒋成瑜 also discusses this poem as well as Fei Ming's other poems in his article, but he does not emphasize the Chan influence. See Jiang Chengyu, "Fei Ming shige jiedu" 废名诗歌解读, *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan*, No. 4, 1989, pp. 219-231.

<sup>49</sup>Sima Changfeng comments that this poem is "the maximum limit in the development of the freeness of a free verse" (自由诗的自由发展到了极限) in his book, *Zhongguo xin wenxueshi, zhongjuan*, p. 203.

<sup>50</sup>The "surrealistic" nature of Fei Ming's poems is pointed out also in *Xiandai Zhongguo shixuan yijiuyiqi -- yijiusijiu, di yi ce* 现代中国诗选 一九一七 --- 一九四九 第一册, ed. Zhang Manyi 张曼仪 et al. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1974), p. 289.

<sup>51</sup>Examples of such 'surrealistic' poems include "Shi'er yue shijiu ye" which was mentioned earlier, and "Siyue ershibari huanghun" 四月二十八日黄昏 which will be discussed in footnote 70 of Chapter Three of this thesis. The critic, Zhu Guangqian wrote that: "Mr Fei Ming's poems are not easy to understand, but once you understand them, you may perhaps marvel at how good they really are. Some poems can be understood on their own by looking at the words but some necessitate a preknowledge of the author. Mr Fei Ming is highly sensitive and fond of cudgelling his brains, and has the flair of a Chan Buddhist and Daoist priest. His poems have a profound abstruse background, and their difficulty lies in this background." (废名先生的诗不容易懂, 但是懂得之后, 你也许要惊叹它真好。有些诗可以从文字本身去了解, 有些诗非先了解作者不可。废名先生富敏感好苦思, 有禅家与道人的风味。他的诗有一个深玄的背景, 难懂的是这背景。) See Zhu Guangqian, "Bianhouji" 编后记, *Wenxue zazhi*, No. 2 (June 1937), quoted in Sima Changfeng, *Zhongguo xin wenxueshi, zhongjuan*, p. 201. Xi Mi 奚密 (= Michelle Yeh) also discusses the Buddhist influence on Fei Ming's poems in her article, "Fei Ming de shi yu shiguan" 废名的诗与诗观, published in Taiwan in *Wenxun* 文讯, No. 32 (July 1987), pp. 182-186. Ya Xian 痲弦 also states that "the language Fei Ming uses is 'that of a Chan Buddhist'" (废名所使用的语言是『禅家的语言』), and comments that: "No doubt, Fei Ming's poems are still of the first class and most 'modern', even if they are read with the most 'avant-garde' eyes of today" (无疑地, 废名的诗即使以今天最『前卫』的眼光来披阅仍是第一流的, 仍是最『现代』的)。See Ya Xian, "Chanqu shiren Fei Ming" 禅趣诗人废名, *Zhongguo xinshi yanjiu* 中国新诗研究 (Taipei: Hongfan shudian youxian gongsi, 1981, 2nd edition 1982), pp. 69-72.

the Daoist/Chan Buddhist view that everything is nothing but a phantom of one's mind-heart.<sup>52</sup>

From 1937 to 1945, during the Sino-Japanese War, Fei Ming's creative writing more or less came to a halt. It was not simply because he had to give priority to surviving the war and to teaching primary and middle school students in Huangmei. He also became much more interested in Chinese philosophy.<sup>53</sup> Apart from his philosophical thesis, "On Ālayavijñā-ñā", he wrote only a few essays such as "Wuzi Temple" ("Wuzisi" 五祖寺) which is about his childhood and "The Preface to the Students' Record of Huangmei Junior Middle School" ("Huangmei Chuji Zhongxue tongxuelu xu" 黄梅初级中学同学录序) which reflects his enthusiasm for teaching. These essays were written out of necessity as a school teacher when modern teaching materials were hard to find, and are therefore naturally plainer than his pre-war essays of the late 1930s. However, they still contain many allusions, most of which are from *The Analects*. It is known from these essays that living in a close contact with children in his hometown as a middle-aged schoolteacher made Fei Ming remember his own school days critically and develop his own ideas about the educational system in China. Fei Ming's thoughts during this period are reflected in his autobiographical story published after the war, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane".

The collection of his poetry criticism, *On New Poetry*, which was published in his absence in Peking in 1944, is made of his lecture

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<sup>52</sup>For the Chan Buddhist view, see Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Chanzong yu Zhongguo wenhua* 禅宗与中国文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1986), p. 60.

<sup>53</sup>See Chapter One, pp. 72-73 of this thesis.

draft for his "modern literature and art" (现代文艺) course<sup>54</sup> held at Peking University before the war. In the book, Fei Ming discusses twelve major May Fourth poets including Hu Shi, Liu Bannong, Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, Kang Baiqing, Bing Xin (冰心 1900-) and Guo Moruo. His choice of poems seems to be partially based upon his friendship with many of the poets, and partially upon his tastes. Fei Ming's criticisms on their poems are often concrete and spontaneous, and not systematic or very theoretical. Probably reflecting his negative view against tonal pattern and rhyme scheme, he omits discussing such prominent formalist poets who wrote rhythmical, colourful poems in the 1920s as Xu Zhimo (徐志摩 1897-1931) and Wen Yiduo (闻一多 1899-1946).<sup>55</sup>

Fei Ming's other books published during the war were the two collections of his poems, *Waterside* (co-authored with Shen Qiwu, 1944) and *Invitation to Hermitism* (1945). The poems of Fei Ming collected in them are more or less exactly the same (except that one more poem is collected in *Waterside*).<sup>56</sup> *Invitation to Hermitism* also includes his eight essays written before the war in the 1930s. Most

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<sup>54</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming zai zhanhou de Beida", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1990, pp. 104-105.

<sup>55</sup>It is interesting that Bian Zhilin mentions Fei Ming's prejudice against the famous, stylish and sociable poet, Xu Zhimo in "Feng Wenbing xuanji, xu" 冯文炳选集序. Bian relates this to the controversy of 1925 caused by ideological differences between the writers of the *Xiandai pinglun* 现代评论 school (to which Xu Zhimo belonged) and the *Yu Si* school (to which Fei Ming was close). Although Fei Ming does not specify the models for his intellectuals in his satirical stories, Bian's suggestion of Fei Ming's prejudice against Xu perhaps indicates Fei Ming's general disposition towards disliking other intellectuals who could be socialites and were, to Fei Ming's eyes, possibly 'Westernized'. Sima Changfeng also finds a similar inclination in Fei Ming's obstinate disagreement with the musicality (音乐的美) of New Poems advocated by Xu Zhimo and Wen Yiduo. See Sima Changfeng, *Zhongguo xin wenxue shi, zhongjuan*, p. 184.

<sup>56</sup>The poem "Jietou" 街头.

of the poems and essays collected in these books had already been published in the 1930s.

After he came back to Peking and resumed teaching at Peking University in 1946, he wrote several essays about his childhood such as "Essay" ("Sanwen" 散文) and "A Story of Hitting a Gong" ("Daluo de gushi" 打锣的故事). Some of them also describe the background of his pre-war stories. His main publication after the war is the incomplete story, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" which came out serially in *Literary Magazine* in 1947-1948. As mentioned earlier, it reflects Fei Ming's changes of thoughts through his wartime experience in his hometown. This will be examined in Chapter Seven.

After the war and back in Peking, he also wrote four more chapters of poetry criticism for *On New Poetry*; this included three chapters on the works of his three old friends with whom he was reunited, Bian Zhilin, Feng Zhi and Lin Geng, and one chapter on his own poems. In the same style as the previous chapters of *On New Poetry*, Fei Ming introduces his friends' and his own poems, adding his interpretation or explanation to them. In 1948, he also published three poems, "A Cock Crows" ("Ji ming" 鸡鸣), "Human Beings" ("Renlei" 人类) and "Truth" ("Zhenli" 真理) in *Literary Magazine* <sup>57</sup>, which express the cruelty of war, and the poet's loneliness and appeal for people to show compassion to each other.<sup>58</sup> It would seem

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<sup>57</sup>Published in Vol, 2, No. 12 (May 1948).

<sup>58</sup>In "A Cock Crows", Fei Ming vividly expresses the fear of war in ominous silence broken only by the sound of a cock's crowing, comparing it to the peaceful serene, Daoist utopian world. The poem goes:

that the wartime experience had widened Fei Ming's perspective, and that his main concern had turned towards the problems of the nation and social improvement for the younger generation. Fei Ming, who was then a middle-aged adult with more experience of life, and father of two teenage children, seems to have become less interested in pursuing his former individualist, or arguably elitist, idea of 'self' in his writings. In time, the dynamic change of the social system would in fact wipe away the possibilities of his free imaginative writing.

Overall, there is some correlation between Fei Ming's poems and stories: his literary mode at a certain period appears more intensely

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Human disaster  
Cannot stop a cock's crowing  
In the village it is very quiet  
Everyone fears the arrival of a great calamity.  
Soon follows fleeing,  
Soon follows death,  
But the cock crows and dog barks in an ideal world.  
人类的灾难  
止不住鸡鸣，  
村子里非常之静，  
大家惟恐大祸来临。  
不久是逃亡，  
不久是死亡，  
鸡鸣狗吠是理想的世界了。

In the last line, Fei Ming seems to allude to the description of an utopian community described in *Daodejing* 道德经, Book Two, LXXX: "Though adjoining states are within sight of one another, and the sound of dogs barking and cocks crowing in one state can be heard in another, yet the people of one state will grow old and die without having had any dealings with those of another." [The translation is from *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching* by D. C. Lau (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1963, rpt. 1985), p. 142.] In "Gui yuan tian ju" 归园田居 by one of Fei Ming's favourite poets, Tao Yuanming, there is also a pertinent description: "Dogs bark deep in the lanes;/A cock crows in the tip of a mulberry." (狗吠深巷中/鸡鸣桑树颠). Fei Ming's confirmation that such utopian world is "ideal" in "A Cock Crows" seems to underline his sadness about harsh reality during the war. This seems to be enhanced by the fact that he wrote many peaceful country stories before the war.

in his poems than his stories. Fei Ming's poems of the early 1920s are in a strongly socio-realistic mode, while his stories start off with a semi-realistic autobiographical tone concerning the problem between self and society (with more emphasis on 'self') and develop predominantly (although some are satirical) into an idealistic, individualistic mode towards the end of the 1920s. While his fiction writing reaches its height in the early 1930s, his poems also begin to employ fantastical, fanciful images. His poems increase their whimsical nature in the 1930s, while his pursuit of an aesthetic world in his prose becomes ineffectual and his interest in Buddhist meditation and reading Chinese classics expands. In terms of language, he preferred "prosaic" language (that is, the post-May Fourth vernacular Chinese over the highly regulated classical-style Chinese) for his poems, while, as will be discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis, he employed poetic language (that is, a more imagistic language using techniques and devices of classical Chinese) in his stories. After the war in the late 1940s, both his poems and stories settle into a socio-realistic mode and his language in both genres becomes much plainer and more prosaic.

Having outlined Fei Ming's creative writings, the following chapters will concentrate on his fiction, especially the country stories, *The Life of Mr Maybe* and its sequel, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", since they technically and artistically surpass his other works. The following chapter begins this analysis by examining his stories about the countryside in Southern China.

## Chapter Three

### The Stories about the Countryside in Southern China

Fei Ming began writing stories about the countryside in Southern China in Spring 1923, roughly six months after he moved to Peking from his hometown to study. His first story of this kind was "Youzi" (柚子)<sup>1</sup>, and he continued writing stories about the countryside throughout the 1920s.

Most of the country stories collected in Fei Ming's first book, *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove*, are written in the first-person.<sup>2</sup> After the publication of this book in October 1925, Fei Ming wrote country stories increasingly in the third-person rather than the first-person, and developed his own particular style, applying unusual and experimental narrative techniques and achieving a succinctness of language.<sup>3</sup> Fei Ming's country stories are usually short, with the exception of one novel, *The Bridge*<sup>4</sup>, in which Fei Ming's original artistic style is elaborated to an extreme.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Youzi" was written on 22 April 1923 and published in *Nuli zhoubao*, Nos. 59 and 60 on the 1st and 8th July 1923. It was first collected in *Zhulin de gushi*.

<sup>2</sup>More precisely: "Youzi", "Bannian" 半年, "Wo de linshe" 我的邻舍, "Chulian" 初恋, "A mei" 阿妹, "Zhegu" 鸫, "Zhulin de gushi" 竹林的故事 and "Quxiang" 去乡.

<sup>3</sup>The stylistic features will be discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

<sup>4</sup>*The Bridge* was published in peculiar ways. Twenty six chapters were first published in *Yu Si* irregularly and randomly between April 1926 and November 1928 in a series entitled "Wuti" 无题. Eighteen of the chapters (which correspond to Part One of the book) were published under the title, "The Bridge" ("Qiao" 桥) in *Luotuocao* in 1930. *The Bridge*, published in book form in June 1932, included previously unpublished chapters and consisted of forty three chapters, divided into two parts. In its preface, Fei Ming wrote that both Parts One and Two remained incomplete. (As already mentioned in Chapter One of this thesis, four sequels to Part Two were published between 1932 and 1934 in the magazines, *Xinyue* 新月 and *Xuewen* 学文. Two more sequels were published in 1937 in *Wenxue zazhi*.) Fei Ming had originally planned to use the title, 'Ta' (塔, 'The Pagoda') instead of 'The Bridge', but changed his mind when he discovered the existence of a contemporary book with the same

### Early short stories in the first-person

In 1923 and 1924, Fei Ming wrote a series of short stories in the first-person which all follow the same pattern: "Youzi", "My Neighbours" ("Wo de linshe" 我的邻舍)<sup>6</sup>, "First Love" ("Chulian" 初恋)<sup>7</sup> and "Partridges" ("Zhegu" 鸚鵡).<sup>8</sup> The 'I' (我) narrating these four stories is a married intellectual from a relatively well-to-do provincial family, whose infant name was Yan (焱). Currently living in the city, he describes with nostalgia his childhood memories in his hometown where he spent a joyous time with his family, neighbouring villagers, and especially with his childhood girlfriend. In both "Youzi" and "Partridges", the name of the narrator's wife is Qin (芹) and that of his childhood girlfriend is Youzi (柚子).

The narrator recounts his memories, often in association with seasonal village events and beautiful rural scenery. For instance, in "Youzi", he recalls the *Qingming* (清明)<sup>9</sup> Festival time when Youzi sang a folk song about a girl's marriage to tease him for holding red azaleas in his hand to give to his fiancée, Qin. In "First Love",

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title. See Fei Ming, "Xu 序", *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 2. According to Fei Ming's own account in "Qiao, fuji" 桥, 附记 published in *Luotuocao*, No. 14 (11 August 1930), which is quoted in Guo Jifang's *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 253-254, the 'contemporary book' was Guo Moruo's 郭沫若 collection, *Ta* (塔). (Guo Moruo's book was published in October 1929.) The version of *The Bridge* discussed from now on in this thesis is that in book form.

<sup>5</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Bianhouji", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 469.

<sup>6</sup>"Wo de linshe" was written on 7 December 1923 and first collected in *Zhulin de gushi* in October 1925.

<sup>7</sup>"Chulian" was written on 10 December 1923 and first published in *Xiandai pinglun*, Vol. 1, No. 17 (10 December 1923).

<sup>8</sup>"Zhegu" was written in September 1924 and first published in *Xiandai pinglun*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (14 February 1924).

<sup>9</sup>Pure Brightness; a day around April 5th or 6th when people pay respects to the deceased at their tombs.

Ancestor's Day during the summer (中元节)<sup>10</sup> is depicted as the day when the narrator felt strongly his childhood affection for a neighbour, Big Sister Yin (银姐). Also, in "My Neighbours", the annual Lantern Festival is mentioned twice as the occasion for a family and communal gathering, which again brings back memories for the narrator.

These memories are fragmentary and loosely connected through a time-shift technique. As the narrator describes past events from his present view, the past in the stories is sometimes felt not so much to be distinct from the present but included in it, indeed permeating it. In other words, the focus of presentness shifts continually.

The characters in the stories are the narrator's family and neighbours in a village or a small local town. None of them is particularly rich or famous. They are fairly 'ordinary' people who are close to and supportive of each other. Fei Ming does not describe their appearances or personalities in detail, but depicts them only sketchily.

From his frequent descriptions of paddy-fields and lakes, and from his diction, the narrator's hometown is known to be in Southern China, and is likely to have been based upon Fei Ming's own hometown. For example, in "Partridges", the narrator describes a local custom of Huangmei, where a new bride embroiders the patterns of two persimmons (shi 柿) and a *Ruyi* (如意) jadeware<sup>11</sup> so

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<sup>10</sup>The 15th day of the 7th lunar month.

<sup>11</sup>*Ruyi* is an S-shaped ornamental object, usually made of jade, formerly a symbol of good luck.

as to decorate a pillow with a rebus, hoping that 'everything goes as one wishes' (事事如意) in her marriage.<sup>12</sup> In "My Neighbours", Mt Wuzu (五祖山) in Huangmei is mentioned as a local sight-seeing spot for foreigners. Similar autobiographical elements can also be found in the characters. In "My Neighbours", the narrator is called 'Second Master' (二先生) by the mother of Big Sister Shu (淑姐), indicating that he, like Fei Ming, is the second son of his family. In the same story, the narrator's mother is called 'Mrs Feng' (冯奶).

The narrator's nostalgia for his native place and his longing for the lost innocence of his carefree childhood there, are the two major themes running through all four stories. The stories are tinged with sadness as Fei Ming mentions the death of someone of the older generation and illustrates the ceaseless passage of time in contrast with human mortality. In "Youzi" and "First Love", the death of the narrator's grandmother is described as if it marked the clear end and irreversibility of his happy childhood. In "My Neighbours", the decline of the fortunes of the brothers, Xiaosong (小松) and Six Fingers (六指), follows their father's death. Another reminder of the absolute loss of a carefree past is the narrator's own development from a child to a married man. In "Partridges", the narrator has to be told by his wife not to talk about Youzi.

The stories also imply mild criticism of the feudalistic arranged marriage. Such criticism is embedded in the subjective tone of the first person narrator and hinted at only subtly. For instance, at the beginning of "Youzi", the narrator comments:

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<sup>12</sup>See the footnote in *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 90.

Before we were ten or so, Youzi and I had led very close lives as children. Yet with my wife, as we had been engaged from the cradle by my maternal grandmother, it felt as though there was some distance between us, as though we had never played so carefree and easily together, although in my heart I really loved her.

当我们大约十岁以内的时候，我同柚子倒很亲密的过了小孩子的生活，妻则因为外祖母的媒介，在襁褓中便替我们把婚约定了，我和她的中间，好像有什么东西隔住，从没畅畅快快的玩耍过，虽然我背地里很爱她。<sup>13</sup>

When the narrator married:

In the autumn of that year, I married. Several of my aunt's daughters, who are older than me, came to my house and we talked and laughed together with the greatest joy. Yet in my mind, there seemed to be a slightly sad and regretful shadow, though it was so blurred that you could barely see it.

那年秋天，我结婚了。我自己姑妈的几位姐儿都来我家，彼此谈笑，高兴得非常，——我的脑里却好像有一点怆恨的影子，不过模糊得几乎看不出罢了。<sup>14</sup>

Thus, instead of putting his finger on the problem of the arranged marriage as a social issue, the narrator dilutes the critical tone considerably by using elusive, subjective expressions such as "some distance" (有什么东西隔住), "shadow" (影子) and "blurred" (模糊). Such vague descriptions are often found in Fei Ming's stories, which is perhaps one of the reasons for their obscurity. The emphasis on subjectivity is also the keynote of Fei Ming's narratives.

Thematically, the above four stories also embody the prototype of Fei Ming's stories about the countryside. In other words, in

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<sup>13</sup>Feng Wenbing, *Zhulin de gushi* (Beijing: Beixin shuju, 1925), p. 11.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

"Youzi", "My Neighbours", "First Love" and "Partridges", the following antitheses can be found:

present	-	past
city	-	country
student life	-	family life
solitude	-	warmth
social anxiety	-	peace
adult	-	child

The narrators in these stories express a yearning for the ideas on the right rather than those on the left.

Although the narrator's first love is not involved as a theme, "The Half Year" ("Bannian" 半年)<sup>15</sup> can be seen to be similar to the above-mentioned four stories, which I shall henceforth call the 'Yan (焱) series' stories. The character setting in "The Half Year" is very similar to that in the 'Yan series' stories: the narrator of "The Half Year" is an intellectual from a provincial well-to-do middle class family, he currently lives in Peking and his wife's name is Qin (芹). Other characters are the narrator's family and anonymous 'ordinary' figures such as a monk, country women who visit his temple, and local young girls picking mushrooms in the pasture who are all depicted sketchily.

The story consists of the narrator's sentimental reminiscences of the half year he spent in his hometown instead of taking a job one and a half years earlier, and unfolds episodically with the time-shift technique. As in the 'Yan series' stories, Fei Ming interweaves

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<sup>15</sup>"Bannian" was written on 9 October 1923 and first published in *Nuli zhoubao*, No. 75 (21 October 1923). It was first collected in *Zhulin de gushi*.

seasonal rural scenery with the narrator's memory and casts a shadow of sadness on the story with the indication of death; here, he inserts the episode of the narrator's friendship with a fatherless boy who is cared for by his widowed mother and grandmother.

In "The Half Year", Fei Ming's preoccupation again lies in expressing the narrator's yearning for the love of his family and strong nostalgia for his native place. Moreover, in "The Half Year", Fei Ming drops a hint of criticism towards the city life behind his praise for the country life. We can see this when the narrator is describing his favourite regional home-made food: "Hah! Even many eighteen-*yuan*-a-month salaries couldn't buy this taste! I can assure you I'm not grumbling: in the last ten years, every time there's been stormy weather, oh, how I have missed it!" (哈哈! 任凭几个十八元, 也买不了这样的味儿! 这决不是我的牢骚语; 十年来, 每当雷雨天气, 我是怎样的想呵。) <sup>16</sup>

"A Tale of a Bamboo Grove" ("Zhulin de gushi" 竹林的故事) <sup>17</sup> is a transitional story between the above-mentioned stories in the first-person, and the stories in the third-person in which a wider range of settings are applied with a more developed style.

"A Tale of a Bamboo Grove" is narrated by a first-person observer about his fragmentary memories of Miss Third (三姑娘) who lives in a thatched cottage in a bamboo grove near a river, whom he came to know in childhood twelve years earlier. As the narrator is an observer here, the narrative tone in "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove" is

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<sup>16</sup>*Zhulin de gushi* (Beijing: Beixin shuji, 1925), p. 72.

<sup>17</sup>"Zhulin de gushi" was written in October 1924 and first published in *Yu Si*, No. 14 (16 February 1925). It was first collected in *Zhulin de gushi*.

more detached than that of the 'Yan' series stories. The narrator's interest lies in describing the outline of the pleasant village life centred around Miss Third, rather than giving his own personal feelings for his past in his hometown.

In the world of the 'bamboo grove', Fei Ming enlarges on the positive side of the life of the heroine and her family. He focuses on Miss Third's cheerfulness, the goodwill of the people surrounding her, and the beauty of the natural scenery. Yet he does not create his story as if it was from a perfect never-never land; instead Fei Ming intentionally minimises the negative side of their life. For instance, at the beginning of the story, he mentions the early deaths of Miss Third's two older sisters, but keeps pale its shadow of unhappiness over their mother by introducing it indirectly and sketchily, rather than describing it in detail. In a similar way, although Fei Ming mentions the death of Miss Third's father, Lao Cheng (老程), when she was about eight, he still paints the story full of optimism:

Spring came, and the bamboos in the grove and the vegetables in the garden became greener and lovelier every day. In extreme contrast, the memory of Cheng's death became fainter and fainter as the days went by; only when a sparrow-hawk circled over the house and the mother called to her daughter, 'Go and check the baby chickens out in the field' did Miss Third go to that side of the the bamboo grove, and remember that it was her daddy lying there. As time went on, and the new grass laid a cover of green over everything, even the fact that she had ever had a father was almost forgotten.

春天来了，林里的竹子，园里的菜，都一天一天的绿得可爱。老程的死却正相反，一天比一天淡漠起来，只有鸢鹰在屋头上打圈子，妈妈呼喊女儿道，『去，去看坦里放的鸡娃』，三姑娘才走到竹林那边，知道这里睡的是爸爸

了。到后来，青草铺平了一切，连曾经有个爸爸这件事几乎也没有了。

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### Stories in the third-person

Fei Ming's country stories in the third-person developed from those in the first-person, as they share many characteristics. The country stories in the third-person also sketchily describe the everyday life of simple genuine-hearted countryfolk who live in harmony with unspoiled nature.

Many of the stories again owe their settings to Fei Ming's memories of his own childhood. The settings of both "A Washerwoman" ("Huanyimu" 浣衣母)<sup>19</sup> and "A Willow Tree at the Riverside" ("Heshangliu" 河上柳)<sup>20</sup> are modelled after Fei Ming's aunt's house.<sup>21</sup> Also, the settings of the short story, "The Waterchestnuts Marsh" ("Lingdang" 菱荡)<sup>22</sup> and the novel, *The Bridge*, that is, Taojia Village (陶家村) and Shijia Village (史家庄) respectively, are modelled after the Yuejia River-bend (岳家湾) where Fei Ming's maternal grandparents' house was.<sup>23</sup> Into *The Bridge* Fei Ming interweaves some of the customs with which he was familiar from his childhood. For instance, the chapter, "Farewell Lanterns"

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<sup>18</sup>Feng Wenbing, *Zhulin de gushi*, p. 167.

<sup>19</sup>"Huanyimu" was written on 29 August 1923 and first published in *Nuli zhoubao*, No. 73 (7 October 1923). It was first collected in *Zhulin de gushi*.

<sup>20</sup>"Heshangliu" was written on 25 April 1925 and first published in *Mangyuan* 莽原, No. 3 (8 May 1925). It was first collected in *Zhulin de gushi*.

<sup>21</sup>Fei Ming, "Sanwen", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 366-369.

<sup>22</sup>"Lingdang" was written in October 1927 and first published in *Beixin*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (16 February 1928). ("Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* omits this.) It was first collected in *Taoyuan*.

<sup>23</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming -- jiechu de sanwenjia" 废名 -- 杰出的散文家, *Jiangnan luntan* 江汉论坛, 1988, No. 6, p. 51.

("Songludeng" 『送路灯』) is based upon his memory of a funerary Huangmei custom.<sup>24</sup> Also, 'Huowuchang' (活无常) which appears in the chapter, "Pupils" ("Tongren" 瞳人) is modelled after the goblin figure, 'Difang' (地方) in the local folklore of the Huangmei region.<sup>25</sup>

In his country stories in the third-person, Fei Ming elaborates his aesthetic world. In this world, the virtue of his characters overcomes any material shortages or bereavements and harmonises with the beauty of nature surrounding them, as in the transitional story, "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove". For instance, the narrator of "A Washerwoman" concentrates on describing the generous warm personality of the diligent middle-aged washerwoman, Li Ma (李妈) who lives in a humble thatched house near a river and helps people voluntarily, looking after their children and serving snacks for workers, just as if she was their common mother. In "The Peach Orchard" ("Taoyuan" 桃园)<sup>26</sup> which is set in an isolated and serene peach orchard, the narrator describes the everyday life of Wang

<sup>24</sup>According to Fei Ming's, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di ba zhang, shanghai de shiqing meiyou jiangwan" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后, 第八章, 上回的事情没有讲完, *Fei Ming xuanji*, pp. 564-566, this was a custom followed when someone dies: for the following three nights after the death, the family and the friends of the deceased march in procession, carrying lanterns. They are followed by a person whose head is wrapped in a white scarf, and who, if the family is rich, is wearing mourning dress. The procession walks to the village temple, burns incense and then comes back to dine. If the deceased is a child, the family will not necessarily follow this custom. (According to "Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao*, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di ba zhang, shanghai de shiqing meiyou jiangwan" was published in *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 2, No. 7, but this seems to be a misprint for No. 8.)

<sup>25</sup>According to Fei Ming's "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, di jiu zhang, Tingqian kanhui", *Fei Ming xuanji*, pp. 587-588, 'Difang' is a goblin figure whose face is painted heavily with powder, and whose eyebrows are very dark and lips very red. It wears sandals made of grass and a white garment, and walks very quickly.

<sup>26</sup>"Taoyuan" was written in September 1927 and first published in *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (10 January 1928). ("Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* omits this.) It was first collected in *Taoyuan*.

Laoda (王老大) who grows peaches there for a living and his thirteen year old amiable daughter, Ah Mao (阿毛姑娘). The story focuses on the love between the father and the daughter. "The Water-chestnuts Marsh" presents a picture of peaceful everyday village life centred around a green marsh and the honest, simple taciturn man, Deaf Chen (陈聋子) who works as a long-term hired hand (长工). The narrator concentrates on describing Chen's straightforward good nature and the concord between the unsophisticated artless villagers, such as the washerwomen and the cowherds.

The narrators of Fei Ming's third-person stories express their negative view of the new forces which tend to change the more spiritual life-style of this old-fashioned rural society. For instance, in "A Washerwoman", Li Ma becomes ostracised in the end, not only because of the feudalistic moral view within the closed community against her closeness to a single young man, but also because of the help she gave him in the running of his tea shop. Towards the end of the story, she appears to have become business-like and loses her earlier vivacity in her new material comfort. Also, the narrator of "A Willow Tree at the Riverside" is reproachful of the new order banning the traditional puppet play which eventually leads the old puppeteer, Uncle Chen (陈老爹), to cut down the willow tree to which he has become very attached. It seems that Fei Ming is trying to draw sympathy for Chen who says to himself indignantly; "A terrible change for the worse! Even the puppet play --" (『真真反变! 连木头戏 --』) by describing his physical frailty in old age in addition to his hollow feeling after losing a sense of worth in his life.

In the novel, *The Bridge*, Fei Ming elaborates two motifs which he expressed earlier in his 'Yan series' stories; childhood innocence and triangular love. *The Bridge* consists of two parts. Part One (上篇) is about the miscellanies of everyday life centred around the twelve year old boy, Cheng Xiaolin (程小林), in early summer. Xiaolin gets engaged to Qinzi (琴子), the daughter of his late father's friend, this has been arranged by her grandmother, Grandma Shi (史家奶奶).

In Part One, the children's playfulness, spontaneity and imaginativeness are described with admiration and humour. For example, in the chapter, "Fooling Around at School" ("Naoxue" 闹学), Xiaolin paints a moustache on the face of his schoolmate, Wang Mao'er (王毛儿), who is taking a nap in their teacher's absence. When Wang Mao'er wakes from dreaming about being hit by his father and cries, Xiaolin shows great sympathy and wipes away Mao'er's tears with his hand, smudging the black ink all over Mao'er's face as well as his own hand. This kind of childish, heartening episode is also seen in other chapters such as "The Shadows of the Lions" ("Shizi de yingzi" 狮子的影子) and "Learning Letters" ("Xizi" 习字). Fei Ming also depicts Xiaolin's naïve benevolence without prejudice towards the beggar who lives next door in a temple in the chapter, "The Setting Sun" ("Luori" 落日). Fei Ming wrote in his essay, "Wuzi Temple" that as an adult, he often felt sympathy for children and admired their purity and carefree innocence.<sup>27</sup> Such ideas of his are embodied fully in Part One.

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<sup>27</sup>"Wuzusi", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 361.

Part Two (下篇) is set in the spring, a decade after the events of Part One and is centred around three youngsters: Xiaolin, who has come back to his hometown from a faraway place where he was studying, his fiancée, Qinzi, and another girl called Xizhu (细竹) who is two years younger than Qinzi. It sketches their merry everyday life in which a triangular, platonic love develops. In this sense, it is suggestive that Part Two begins in spring, the season traditionally associated with love. The pattern of their relationship shows a close resemblance to that of the narrator, his wife (Qin), and his childhood girlfriend (Youzi) in the early 'Yan series' stories.<sup>28</sup> Part Two closes with their relationship left ambiguous.

In his country stories written in the third-person, Fei Ming often chooses to write about characters who are considered to be socially marginal in the traditional sense, such as children, women, old people and poor labourers. Usually, they are not blessed with good fortune. Li Ma in "A Washerwoman" is deserted by her drunkard husband and son, and outlives her other son and daughter. Uncle Chen in "A Willow Tree at the Riverside" is an old widower who used to eke out an income with his puppet-play until it was banned. In "The Peach Orchard", Wang Laoda is a poor widower, and Ah Mao is an unfortunate girl who lost her mother and who is in bad health. Deaf Chen in "The Water-chestnuts Marsh" and Mute Third Uncle (三哑叔) in *The Bridge* are middle-aged long-term hired hands who are

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<sup>28</sup>Yang Yi 杨义 comments on *The Bridge*: "There are some similarities of plot between it and the early short story, 'Youzi', but it has smoothed away the slight sadness of 'Youzi', replacing it with joy and a poetic flavour." (在情节上它与作者早期短篇小说《柚子》有某些相似之处,但它已经抹平了《柚子》中的淡淡悲哀,而代之以欢乐与诗意了。) in his *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuoshi* 中国现代小说史, Vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1986), pp. 456-457.

presumably still too poor to take a wife. Mute Third Uncle had been a beggar when he was small. In *The Bridge*, Qinzi is an orphan raised by her grandmother and Xiaolin has lost his father. Wang Mao'er has also lost his mother.

Fei Ming attempts to throw light on the happiness that can exist in the lives of such vulnerable people in low social positions. To achieve this, he downplays the differences in class, wealth and fortune in the rural society he depicts in his stories. For instance, in *The Bridge*, Fei Ming does not mention any gulfs between the relatively wealthy Grandma Shi and her employees, Wang Ma (王妈) and Mute Third Uncle, but describes them as being in accord with one another. In the chapter "The Peach Wood" ("Taolin" 桃林) of *The Bridge*, we see He Sihai (何四海), the owner of a peach wood, who employs three long-term hired hands. Describing He's employees as "three long-term hired hands whom their family asked in" (他们家里请的三个长工) and suggesting that He usually dines with them, Fei Ming implies their relationship is an amicable one.

Fei Ming also focuses on the peaceful state of mind of his characters in their everyday life. For instance, in "The Water-chestnuts Marsh":

He walked back to the buckets, rested the pole on them, then sat down on it. He pulled his pipe out for a smoke; all his property was tucked into his belt. Deaf was a hardened smoker, and if it had been anyone else, Second Uncle would have found plenty to say on the subject. (Wang Siniu, who lived further downstream, had this to say: Deaf gets all that money -- What would he spend it on if he didn't smoke? And there's the money he gets from selling his vegetables and water chestnuts.)

走回了原处，扁担横在水桶上，他坐在扁担上，拿出烟竿来吃，他的全副家伙都在腰边。聋子这个脾气利害，倘是别个，二老爹一天少不了罗苏几遍，但是他的聋子。（垆里下湾的王四牛却这样说：一年四吊毛钱，不吃烟做什么？何况聋子挑了水，卖菜卖菱角！）<sup>29</sup>

In this short paragraph, Fei Ming expresses Deaf Chen's poverty and the good relationship between Chen and Second Uncle. Also, he hints at the hardship of Chen's life by depicting his smoking, probably one of the few pleasures in his life. However, by mentioning Deaf Chen's small but extra income, Fei Ming tries to emphasize Chen's happiness. In "A Washerwoman", Fei Ming illustrates the gratifying side of Li Ma's life even though her life is less fortunate than her neighbour, Wang Ma:

Li Ma had a deep feeling of emptiness. However, seeing the other people's terror allowed her to fill in some of her emptiness unconsciously. First there were the bandits that plundered, then there were the soldiers that harassed people, so that anyone with property, or a family home, and even those who had every kind of fortune, could not live in peace. Only Li Ma and Miss Hunchback could carry on going in and out of their thatched house as always.

李妈很感空虚，然而别人的恐怖，无意间也能够使自己的空虚填实一点了。始而匪的劫掠，继而兵的骚扰，有财产，有家室，以及一切幸福的人们都闹得不能安居，只有李妈同驼背姑娘仍然好好的出入茅草房。<sup>30</sup>

Behind such an enlargement of the happiness of rather marginal, unlucky characters in his stories, there seems to lie Fei Ming's Daoist/Chan Buddhist philosophy. Chan Buddhism aims at 'releasing

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<sup>29</sup>Feng Wenbing *xuanji*, p. 74. This translation is partially based on that of Christopher Smith, published in *Chinese Literature*, Spring 1990, p. 117.

<sup>30</sup>Zhulin *de gushi* (Beijing: Beixin shuju, 1925), p. 63.

souls from purgatory' (超度)<sup>31</sup> and keeping a calm, peaceful state of mind.<sup>32</sup> Daoist thought also teaches taking one's fate as it is.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>In the chapter "Qiao" 桥 in *The Bridge*, Fei Ming actually uses the word, "chaodu" 超度. See Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 303. Also, Li Junguo 李俊国 suggests the influence of Chan Buddhist ideas on Fei Ming's country stories. See Li Junguo, "Fei Ming yu chanzong" 废名与禅宗, *Jiangnan luntan*, 1988, No. 6, pp. 56-58; as does Ma Wei 马伟 in his article, "Youmei, guqiao, ziran -- cong 'Lingdang' xi Fei Ming" 幽美, 孤峭, 自然 -- 从《菱荡》析废名, *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu* 中国现代, 当代文学研究, 1990, No. 2, pp. 96-98. See also Hu Shaohua 胡绍华, "Fei Ming de xiaoshuo yu chandao touying" 废名的小说与禅道投影, *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1992, No. 1, pp. 91-96; Xu Wenmou 徐文谋, "Fei Ming xiaoshuo de yijing jiegou fenxi" 废名小说的意境结构分析, *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1992, No. 6, pp. 139-140; and Du Xiuhua 杜秀华, "Qiao: zai chanjing zhong gouzhu" 《桥》: 在禅境中构筑, *Liaoning daxue xuebao* 辽宁大学学报, 1993, No. 1, pp. 97-101 and p. 107. Luo Chengyan 罗成琰 also discusses the Chan influence on Fei Ming's stories in his articles, "Ren yu ziran -- lun xiandai Zhongguo zuojia de ziran shenmei yishi" 人与自然 -- 论现代中国作家的自然审美意识, published in *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan*, 1989, No. 2, pp. 220-221; "Fei Ming de Qiao yu chan" 废名的《桥》与禅, published in *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan*, 1992, No. 1, pp. 70-81; and "Xiandai Zhongguo langman wenxue sichao de chuantong yuanyuan" 现代中国浪漫文学思潮的传统渊源, published in *Wenxue pinglun*, No. 4, 1991, pp. 97-107.

<sup>32</sup>Ge Zhaoguang, *Chanzong yu Zhongguo wenhua*, pp. 94-96. Ge wrote (p. 95) that Chan Buddhism considers everything external as nothing and the universe (宇宙) as 'minute dust' (微尘). Fei Ming also expressed a similar idea in his line "The universe is an undamageable fluttering speck of dust" (宇宙是一颗不损坏的飞尘) in his poem entitled "Feichen" 飞尘 which was collected in *Shuibian* and *Zhaoyinji*. The Buddhist influence can also be seen in the chapter, "Island in the River" ("Zhou" 洲) of *The Bridge*: 'a statue of merciful Guanyin' (大慈大悲的观世音) which Xiaolin likes to look at is described. See Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 35-36. Also, in the chapters, "Riji" 日记 and "Qiao" in *The Bridge*, the Buddhist idols (*Bodhistattva*), "guanshiyin" 观世音 and "pusa" 菩萨 are mentioned. See *Qiao*, p. 166 and p. 306 respectively.

<sup>33</sup>For example, a passage in "The Sign of Virtue Complete" in *Zhuangzi* goes: "Life, death, preservation, loss, failure, success, poverty, riches, worthiness, unworthiness, slander, fame, hunger, thirst, cold, heat -- these are the alterations of the world, the workings of fate. Day and night they change place before us and wisdom cannot spy out their source. Therefore, they should not be enough to destroy your harmony; they should not be allowed to enter the Spirit Storehouse. If you can harmonize and delight in them, master them and never be at a loss for joy, if you can do this day and night without break and make it be spring with everything, mingling with all and creating the moment within your own mind -- this is what I call being whole in power." The English translation is from Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 73-74. This kind of idea seems to be embodied in Xiaolin's words in the chapter, "Gushi" of *The Bridge* (pp. 365-366), which were quoted at the beginning of Chapter One of this thesis: "The significance of life lies not in its story, but in the

Fei Ming generally puts much weight on the descriptions of scenery, and sometimes inserts an overview of the setting of his rural world. For instance, in "The Water-chestnuts Marsh", the marsh is described from a higher position, that is, under the maple next to the pagoda where there was a view of the entire lowlands surrounding the marsh. Similarly, in the chapter, "Sandy Shore" ("Shatan" 沙滩) of *The Bridge*, the scenery of Shijia Village is described from two positions: standing in the middle of the sloping paddy fields (站在史家庄的田坂当中望史家庄) and on the dyke (站在史家庄的坝上). The way in which Fei Ming's mind's eye<sup>34</sup> sees the settings and the characters from such a spatial distance and attempts to show their outlook, is somewhat reminiscent of the Daoist/Chan Buddhist transcendental attitude of 'viewing human affairs with a philosophic eye' (达观).<sup>35</sup> Such a panoramic view of restful, tranquil country

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foregrounding of the story's style. As for the story, let it be one of destiny -- I mean, accidental circumstances."

<sup>34</sup>My usage of the word, "mind's eye" derives from Yu-kung Kao's in his essay, "The Aesthetics of Regulated Verse", *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to the T'ang*, ed. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 371. Kao writes of Tao Yuanming's poetry: "The description is seen not through his physical eyes, but through his mind's eye ..."

<sup>35</sup>Li Junguo and Xiao Ping 肖平 also point out the Daoist/Chan Buddhist idea of transcendence found in Fei Ming's works. See Li Junguo, "Fei Ming yu Chanzong", *Jiangnan luntan*, 1988, No. 6, pp. 56-58, and Xiao Ping, "Fei Ming yishu jingshen shuangcengmian chutan" 废名艺术精神双层面初探, *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, No. 8, 1988, pp. 239-241. Although Li and Xiao do not point this out in their articles, in traditional Chinese literature there are also some examples which indicate the Daoist idea that a view from a height leads one to a spiritual transcendental condition. For example, in the "Free and Easy Wandering" of *Zhuangzi*, the Daoist Free Man (至人) who transcends the secular world and realises the equality of all things is symbolised in the description of a high-flying bird, the "peng" (鹏, roc): "The *Universal Harmony* records various wonders, and it says: 'When the [Peng] journeys to the southern darkness, the waters are roiled for three thousand li. He beats the whirlwind and rises ninety thousand li, setting off on the sixth-month gale.' Wavering heat, bits of dust, living things blowing each other about -- the sky looks very blue. Is that its real color, or is it because it is so

scenery inserted in his stories also gives the reader the psychological effect of temporarily overstepping the limitations of the characters' unfortunate personal circumstances. In other words, they make the reader stop accentuating the individual characters' momentary situations, and instead turn the reader's attention to the total picture in which the characters are living in harmony with nature.

As mentioned earlier, Fei Ming's country stories are often tinged with sadness. This is, in fact, their essential underlying feature. It is therefore necessary to examine how this sense of 'sadness' is created in his country stories. But, first, why does he express it in these stories?

#### **Aesthetic view of death**

It seems that Fei Ming viewed death as an aesthetic event from the very beginning of his writing career. It is curious that many of the stories which he liked to read during the early period of his literary career deal with the death of susceptible figures such as children, or a young but frail lonely woman. Fei Ming wrote in his essay, "Talking of Dreams" in 1927:

How much I used to like reading such works as "Homesickness" and "Goldfish" (both of which can be seen in Mr Zhou Zuoren's *A Collection of Modern Japanese Stories*) at that time! But now I don't even turn their pages. In my notebook, there still remain many secret signs, all of which are the materials I had prepared when I wrote *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove*. Now facing

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far away and has no end? When the bird looks down, all he sees is blue, too." (The translation is from *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, translated by Burton Watson, p. 29.)

them, just like facing a deceased friend, I remember his lifetime and grieve.

我当初是怎样的爱读《乡愁》，《金鱼》（俱见周作人先生《现代日本小说集》）这类作品，现在我连翻也不翻他一翻。我的抄本上还留下了不少的暗号，都是写《竹林的故事》时预备写的题材，现在我对着他们，正如对着一位死的朋友，回忆他的生前，哀伤着。<sup>36</sup>

"Homesickness" ("Kyōshū" 乡愁) which Fei Ming mentions here is a short story by Katō Takeo (加藤武雄, 1888-1956).<sup>37</sup> It is about a little girl called Yokkochan and is narrated in the first person by the father of one of her playmates. Yokkochan loses her mother when she is one and moves to another town away from her old playmates when she is five. One day the narrator hears of her sudden death and remembers that she would often say to her nurse, "Let's go home!" The story ends with the narrator's words; "I only think of the homesickness of the little soul demanding to 'go home' and wonder to what 'home' Yokkochan went back in the end".<sup>38</sup>

The other work Fei Ming mentions, "Goldfish" ("Kingyo" 金鱼) is a short story by Suzuki Miekichi (铃木三重吉, 1882-1936).<sup>39</sup> It is also narrated in the first-person and is about the narrator's memories of his lonely, frail, reticent wife, Ofusa. After leaving hospital, the narrator was at home writing his first novel. Although he knew the loneliness of his quiet wife, he still could not help venting all his

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<sup>36</sup>Fei Ming, "Shuomeng" [first published in *Yu Si*, No. 133 (28 May 1927)], *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 319.

<sup>37</sup>"Homesickness" was translated into Chinese by Zhou Zuoren and published in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* (小说月报, *Short Story Magazine*), Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 16-20 in 1921. It was later collected in *Xiandai Riben xiaoshuoji* (现代日本小说集), a book edited by Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren and was published in 1923.

<sup>38</sup>Katō Takeo, "Xiangchou" 乡愁, translated into Chinese by Zhou Zuoren, *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (10 January 1921).

<sup>39</sup>"Kingyo" was translated by Zhou Zuoren and first published in *Dongfang zazhi* 东方杂志, Vol. 18, No. 24 (25 December 1921). It was also later collected in *Xiandai Riben xiaoshuoji*. Fei Ming wrote a review of the collection in 1923.

vexations upon Ofusa: vexation with poverty, stress from the difficult process of writing, troubles with her mother and psychological injury from his old relationship with his previous lover. Ofusa patiently endured everything. One day in the evening when she returned home with some pet goldfish, she fell into bed, vomiting blood. Although the narrator does not describe Ofusa's death in detail, it is nonetheless apparent in his sad, remorseful, reminiscent tone. As in "Homesickness", the story deals with the loneliness, ill-fate and death of a defenceless character.<sup>40</sup>

Although Fei Ming wrote in the essay that he stopped reading these Japanese stories after writing his stories collected in *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove*, he was still attracted to other melancholic stories involving death. He wrote in his essay, "A Story of Hitting a Gong" that in the mid-1920s he was impressed by the beautiful expression of the loneliness of death in the short story, "Hide-and-Seek" by the Russian writer, Fedor Solocub (1863-1927).<sup>41</sup> The title, "Hide-and-Seek" comes from the game frequently played between the main characters: the doting mother who is unhappy with her cold husband, and her only daughter, little Lelechka. At the end of the story, Lelechka dies of illness while playing the game with her mother, and her mother goes mad. A critic, Murl G. Barker, states that Solocub uses the images of dream, art and beauty for the positive world and those of reality, life and vulgarity for the negative world in his

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<sup>40</sup>Suzuki Miekichi, "Kingyo", *Meiji Taishō bungaku zenshū, dai nijūhachi kan, Suzuki Miekichi hen* 明治大正文学全集 第二十八卷 鈴木三重吉篇 (Tokyo: Shunyōdō, 1927), pp. 270-273.

<sup>41</sup>"Daluo de gushi", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 376-9.

works.<sup>42</sup> In writing his country stories about the life of ordinary people, Fei Ming also uses the image of death to embellish his art with melancholy, and in Su Xuelin's (苏雪林) words<sup>43</sup>, gives an effect like "that of some Russian writers in which tears are shimmering beneath their smiles".<sup>44</sup>

Being so fond of foreign stories about the death of vulnerable characters, Fei Ming seems to have had a critical view on the lack of pessimistic writings in Chinese traditional literature. In the essay

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<sup>42</sup>Murl G. Barker, "Introduction", Fedor Solocub, *The Kiss of the Unborn and Other Stories*, translated and with an introduction by Murl G. Barker (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1977), p. xxii. Also, Barker points out (pp. xxii-xxiii) that the following incantation introducing Solocub's trilogy (*Tvorimaya legenda*) explains Solocub's intent in art: "I take a piece of life, coarse and poor, and I create out of it a delightful legend, for I am -- a poet. Whether you, life, dim and everyday, stagnate in gloom or rage in a furious fire -- I, the poet, will erect above you a legend created by me about the charming and the beautiful." Fei Ming's following poem written in 1931 expresses strikingly similar ideas to Solocub's:

I write in a woman's dream the word 'good'.  
I write in a man's dream the word 'beauty'.  
I, the pessimist-poet, paint a beautiful landscape.  
I, the child, draw a world for him.  
我在女人的梦里写一个善字,  
我在男子的梦里写一个美字,  
厌世诗人我画一幅好看的山水,  
小孩子我替他画一个世界。

See Fei Ming, "Zhongguo wenzhang", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 344. The poem is referred to as "Meng" 梦 in the essay, but it is collected, entitled "Meng zhi shizhe" 梦之使者 in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 290. The aspirations of "the pessimist-poet and child" in this poem to "paint a beautiful landscape" and "draw a world" come to fruition in Fei Ming's stories.

<sup>43</sup>In *1500 Modern Chinese Novels & Plays* by Jos. Schyns and Others, p. VIII.

<sup>44</sup>In fact, there is such a scene in the chapter, "Jinyinhua" 金银花 of *The Bridge*: "Qin'er's hand was pulling her grandmother, and in the other hand were the flowers Xiaolin gave her, and the two were surprised but stealing a glance at each other. Grandma was smiling, looking downward, and in her drowsy eyes, there also seemed to be tears ... They were two (half-)orphans, and Qin'er lost her mother as well." (琴儿一手也牵祖母, 那手是小林给她的花, 两人惊讶而偷偷的相觑。奶奶俯视着笑, 朦胧的眼里似乎又有泪 ... 这是两个孤儿, 而琴儿, 母亲也没有了。) This is the scene in which Xiaolin and Qinzi meet for the first time. See Fei Ming, *Qiao*, (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 10.

written in 1936, "Chinese Writings" ("Zhongguo wenzhang" 中国文章), he wrote:

The Chinese are down to earth and certainly respect reality, they are short on ideals and like to ponder 'death' even less, and this is why there is so often a stagnant atmosphere not only in their lives but also in their art, as though everyone lacked a public garden ... I once thought: if China had not received some Buddhist influences later, the atmosphere of her literature and art may have been even more stale and her writings may have lost even more fine words.

中国人生在世，确乎是重实际，少理想，更不喜欢思索那“死”，因此不但生活上就在文艺里也多是凝滞的空气，好象大家缺少一个公共的花园似的。... 我尝想，中国后来如果不是受了一点儿佛教影响，文艺里的空气恐怕更陈腐，文章里恐怕更要损失好些好看的字面。<sup>45</sup>

From this, it would seem that Fei Ming associated the idea of death with ideals and beauty. Indeed, in the 1930s he wrote in *On New Poetry*: "Poets are basically all pessimistic. Only 'death' is the true home of poets. They believe that there should be beauty there." (诗人本来都是厌世的，“死”才是真正的诗人的故乡，他们以为那里才有美丽。)<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, in the chapter, "Tree" ("Shu" 树) of *The Bridge*, Xiaolin says: "The writings of pessimists are always beautiful ..." (厌世者做的文章总美丽 ...).<sup>47</sup> In the same novel's chapter, "Qingming" (清明), the narrator describes Qinzi, who sits in the graveyard where her family are buried: "Qinzi showed a faint smile, but her eyebrows, had it not

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<sup>45</sup>Fei Ming, "Zhongguo wenzhang" [first published in *Shijie ribao fukan, Mingzhu* 世界日报副刊, 明珠, No. 37 (6 November 1936)], *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 344-345.

<sup>46</sup>Feng Wenbing, *Tan xiushi* (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1984), p. 213.

<sup>47</sup>*Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 344. Xiaolin says these words in response to Xizhu who tells him about a funny play she saw: the play was supposed to end with a scene in which a clown played by a Buddhist monk kills a villain, but the monk added his own extra word, "Amitabha!" Here it seems that Fei Ming connects Buddhist ideas with pessimistic beauty.

been for the word sadness in her life, could not have had such beauty." (琴子微露笑貌，但眉毛，不是人生有一个哀字，没有那样的好看。)<sup>48</sup>

However, Fei Ming has never written any reasons explaining why he was so fascinated by pessimistic beauty and the image of death. However, it is known that death was a familiar event to Fei Ming as a child. This can be seen from his own comments such as: "I, as a child, have had much experience of seeing dead children being buried" (我，一个小孩子，有多次看着死的孩子埋在土里的经验)<sup>49</sup> and the biographical fact that he lost his younger sister in his childhood. It is possible that such an early experience had a strong impression on him. Also, his idealistic vision of death might have been enforced by his belief in Buddhism as he articulates it in "Chinese Writings".<sup>50</sup> He also connected 'death' with the idea of unworldliness in *On New Poetry*: "Life is good only at the times of parting and meeting again, when we are not worldly! Death is parting ..." (人生本来只有别离时好，再见时好，这时我们不俗！死也就是别离...)<sup>51</sup> Fei Ming's aesthetic view of death seems to be the primary source of the sad atmosphere in his

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>49</sup>"Daluo de gushi", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 378.

<sup>50</sup>Guo Jifang describes a Huangmei custom called "Crossing the Bridge" ("Guoqiao" 过桥) and suggests that it brought Fei Ming a joyous image of death. According to Guo, this Huangmei belief suggests that after people die, they all have to cross Naihe Bridge (奈何桥) in the nether world, which is extremely hard to cross. Therefore if they cross it in this world, they can dispense with crossing it in hell after death. "Crossing the Bridge" is held once every three years by the monks at Dongyue temple (东岳庙) which is two *li* outside the Huangmei municipality. They put up a wooden bridge in the mountain near the temple to represent Naihe Bridge in hell, and those who cross the bridge are neatly dressed and full of joy and vie with each other in doing it. On this occasion there are huge crowds of people including food sellers, and children can enjoy themselves freely in the festive atmosphere. See Guo, *Meng de zhenshi yu mei -- Fei Ming*, pp. 44-45. This custom is in fact, described in Chapter Nine of Fei Ming's autobiographical story, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane"; see *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 590.

<sup>51</sup>Feng Wenbing, *Tan xinshi*, p. 211.

country stories. This view sometimes appears in his expression of the awareness of the passage of time.<sup>52</sup>

### The awareness of the passage of time

Fei Ming's idealistic vision of death seems to have led him to the melancholic but beautified expression of the passage of time and man's mortality in his country stories. For instance, in the chapter, "Cat" ("Mao" 猫) in *The Bridge*, Fei Ming conveys an acute sense of the sadness of the aged in Grandma Shi's quoted monologue<sup>53</sup> in response to being asked to pick a fortune-telling picture (命画): "Child, what is there left for me to pick?" (孩子呵, 我还抽什么呢?)<sup>54</sup>

He also contrasts man's ephemeral existence with nature's constancy and self-renewal.<sup>55</sup> For instance, at the end of the chapter, "Willows" ("Yangliu" 杨柳) in *The Bridge*, he writes:

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<sup>52</sup>This may also result from the influence of one of Fei Ming's favourite poets, Tao Yuanming. The critic, Li Bo 黎波 suggests that Tao often expressed a sense of the passage of time in his poems because he was always conscious of the idea of death. Li's examples are: Tao's lines such as "Where there is life, there must be death" (有生必有死) in "Wangeshi sanshou" 挽歌诗三首, No. 1, "The Universe -- oh how far it extends!" (宇宙一何悠 / 人生少至百) in "Yin jiu" 饮酒, No. 15 and "The years of our prime do not come again; / To one day there can be no second dawn. / To meet the occasion we must strive; / Years and months do not wait for men." (盛年不重来 / 一日难再晨 / 及时当勉励 / 岁月不待人) from "Zashi shiershou" 杂诗十二首, No. 1. (The English translation of these lines are from A. R. Davis, *T'ao Yuan-ming: His Works And Their Meaning, Volume I*, p. 172, p. 99, p. 129.) See Rei Ha (= Li Bo), "Tō Enmei no shi to bun" 陶淵明の诗と文, *Chūgoku bungakukan -- Shikyō kara Ha Kin* 中国文学馆 -- 诗经から巴金 (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 1984, rpt. 1986), pp. 70-77. (Li Bo writes and publishes in Japanese.)

<sup>53</sup>Quoted monologue is a verbatim quotation of a character's mental language, in the context of third person narrative. See Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978, paperback printing, 1983), pp. 58-98.

<sup>54</sup>Qiao (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 45.

<sup>55</sup>This has already been mentioned in the case of Fei Ming's poem, "Huapen" in Chapter Two of this thesis. This kind of contrast is often made in Chinese traditional poetry. James Liu points out that the "contrast between the mutability and transiency of human life on the one hand and the permanence and eternal renewal of the life of Nature on the other" gives "much Chinese

In fact, and to be precise, only spring doesn't change; spring has no past or present. We cannot ascribe the scenes of planting a tree here and chopping a tree there to spring changes.

The place between the two willows was where one drew water, and there were a few steps made from green stone slabs.

Mute Third Uncle was drawing water. Xiaolin said:

'I'll live in Shijia Village and I'll want to live to be a hundred and drink this good water of Mute Third Uncle's.'

'Ha-ha-ha.'

'And I must be drinking in this river water the dew from the willows Mute Third Uncle planted.'

'Ha-ha-ha.'

This chuckle of Mute Third Uncle's was still for Xiaolin's first comment; he hadn't heard the second one clearly.

其实，确切的说，最没有分别的只是春天，春天无今昔。我们不能把这里栽了一棵树那里伐了一棵树归到春天的改变。

那两棵杨柳之间就是取水的地方，河岸在这里有青石砌成的几步阶级。

三哑取水。小林说：

"我住在史家庄要百岁长寿，喝三哑叔这样的好水！"

"哈哈。"

"三哑叔栽的杨柳的露水我一定也从河水当中喝了。"

"哈哈。"

三哑这一笑，依然是因为小林第一句，第二句他还没有听清白。<sup>56</sup>

Here, Fei Ming suggests the eternity of natural cycle such as the constant return of spring, and the dew from the trees becoming the river water which then grows the trees. On the other hand, Xiaolin's words imply the mortality of both young Xiaolin and old Mute Third Uncle. By indicating the idea of death which every human being must face, Fei Ming permeates the scene with melancholy.<sup>57</sup>

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poetry a special poignancy and endows it with a tragic sense". See James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 50.

<sup>56</sup>*Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 199-200.

<sup>57</sup>It is also possible that the idea of ephemerality of human being's (or, in this case, more directly, Mute Third Uncle's) life is hinted at by the image of "dew", since "dew" is sometimes associated with the idea of evanescence in literature

In the "Qingming" chapter in *The Bridge*, Fei Ming uses the seasonal setting of the Qingming festival to illustrate the idea of 'death'. He describes a scene in which Xiaolin, Qinzi, Xizhu and Mute Third Uncle visit the tombs to pay respect to the dead. In the graveyard they are surrounded by fresh green grass. Here, Fei Ming again conveys the pale sadness of human ephemerality against the background of the 'rebirth' of nature.

Fei Ming's aesthetic view of death is reflected in his description of tombs (坟). In the above-mentioned chapter, "Qingming", Xiaolin says: "'Death' is life's best ornament. Not only this, if there had been no tombs on the ground, my childhood would have simply turned into a big empty space, as I remember I used to enjoy climbing and playing on tombs very much." (『死』是人生最好的装饰。不但此也，地面没有坟，我儿时的生活简直要成了一大块空白，我记得我非常喜欢上到坟头上玩。) <sup>58</sup> In his essay, Fei Ming mentioned the lines by Yu Xin, "Frost whitens after the willows, the moon waxes after the tombs" <sup>59</sup> (霜随柳白，月遂坟圆) and "Now only her Garden Tomb is left, solitary against

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(for example, there is a Chinese [and Japanese] saying; "Life is as evanescent as the morning dew" ["rensheng ru zhaolu" 人生如朝露]). Yet Fei Ming also brings out a sense of salvation in Xiaolin's words, "And I must be drinking in this river water the dew from the willows Mute Third Uncle planted." This suggests that even after Mute Third Uncle's death, he will be remembered by Xiaolin through the everlasting natural water cycle. On the other hand, Fei Ming may also be embellishing the scene with some mystical connotation suggested by these words, since dew was supposed to be a precious elixir of life for those who had a strong belief in Daoism in early China. In any case, Fei Ming enlivens the scene with young Xiaolin's innocence and Mute Third Uncle's light-hearted response.

<sup>58</sup>Qiao (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 226.

<sup>59</sup>The English translation here is mine. The lines are from "An Epitaph on the Death of the Northern Zhou Cavalry General, Area Commander, Houmouchen Daosheng" ("Zhou piaoqi dajiangjun kaifu Houmouchen Daosheng muzhiming" 周骠骑大将军开府侯莫陈道生墓志铭). One of Fei Ming's favourite poets, Yu Xin wrote numerous records of events inscribed on a tablet ("bei" 碑) and inscriptions on the memorial tablets within tombs ("zhiming" 志铭).

the dusk." (独留青冢向黄昏) by Du Fu<sup>60</sup>, as his favourite examples of beautiful descriptions of scenery with a pessimistic touch in Chinese classical literature.<sup>61</sup> In another essay, he wrote: "I like seeing old tombs" (我是喜欢看陈死人的坟的).<sup>62</sup>

Fei Ming often describes tombs in his country stories, as Yang Jianlong (杨剑龙) points out.<sup>63</sup> Apart from the above-mentioned "Qingming" chapter in *The Bridge*, he writes about the tombs between the town wall and the river in "A Washerwoman", Cheng's tomb in "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove", Ah Mao's mother's tomb in "The Peach Orchard", 'Each Family's Tomb' (家家坟) in the chapter, "Eulalias" ("Bamao" 芭茅) of *The Bridge*, and the Shijia Village graveyard named 'Under the Pine Tree' in the "'Under the Pine Tree'" ("Songshu jiaoxia" 『松树脚下』) chapter in *The Bridge*.

In Fei Ming's country stories, there are other leitmotifs which are also connected with the idea of transience and which create a somewhat pensive atmosphere, such as 'dusk' (黄昏) and 'peach' trees.

### 'Dusk'

Dusk or evening as the sun sets is a frequent scene in Fei Ming's country stories: for example, in "Youzi", "A Washerwoman", "My Neighbours", "The Water-chestnuts Marsh", "The Peach Orchard", and

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<sup>60</sup>The poem is "Yong huai guji" (咏怀古迹 "Thoughts on an Ancient Site"), No. 2. The translation is from David Hawkes, *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 177.

<sup>61</sup>Fei Ming, "Zhongguo wenzhang", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 345.

<sup>62</sup>Fei Ming, "Daluo de gushi", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 378-379.

<sup>63</sup>Yang Jianlong, "Lun Fei Ming xiaoshuo de shiyimei" 论废名小说的诗意美, *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1989, No. 8, p. 113.

ten chapters of *The Bridge*.<sup>64</sup> In fact, Fei Ming uses the image of dusk not only to create a sad atmosphere, but also in other ways. Since the scene recurs in his country stories and is therefore a conspicuous characteristic, the meanings which the image seems to imply should be discussed.

Fei Ming wrote in his 1927 essay, "Talking of Dreams" that he liked dusk (黄昏) so much that he had thought of naming his first collection of stories 'Dusk' ('Huanghun' 黄昏), instead of 'A Tale of a Bamboo Grove', and giving as its foreword the following lines of a Greek woman poet:

Dusk, you recall everything, everything that the bright morning dispels. You recall sheep, you recall goats, you recall children to their mothers' side.

黄昏呵，你招回一切，光明的早晨所驱散的一切，你招回绵羊，招回山羊，招回小孩到母亲的旁边。<sup>65</sup>

The Greek woman poet referred to here is probably Sappho (mid-7th cent. BC) of whom Zhou Zuoren was fond.<sup>66</sup> Zhou translated her

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<sup>64</sup>The chapters, "Luori" 落日, "Zhou" 洲, "Wanshougong" 万寿宫, "Bamao" 芭茅, "Bei" 碑, "Riji" 日记, "Yangliu" 杨柳, "Huanghun" 黄昏, "Huahongshan" 花红山, and "Gushi" 故事.

<sup>65</sup>Fei Ming, "Shuomeng", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 321. Although Fei Ming wrote in the essay: "I do not know when it began, but 'dusk' gradually drifted apart from me" (不知从什么时候起黄昏渐渐于我疏远了), dusk scenes still often appear in his country stories written after 1927.

<sup>66</sup>There is a poem by Sappho which seems to be the source of this. Sappho's poem, "Evening Star" goes:

Hesperos, you bring home all the bright dawn disperses,  
bring home the sheep,  
bring home the goat, bring the child home to its mother

In Greek mythology, Hesperos is the evening star, the son of Astraios or Kephalos or Atlas and Eos (Dawn) and father of the Hesperides (= divine maidens, guardians of the golden apples in the garden of the gods). See *Sappho and the Greek Lyric Poets*, translated and annotated by Willis Barnstone (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), p. 94 and p. 313.

poems into Chinese and had written articles on her before the 1920s. Here, the image of dusk seems to be that of homecoming.<sup>67</sup> One reason why Fei Ming employed dusk scenes frequently in his early short stories is probably because its image of homecoming matched their themes: the yearning for a lost childhood in one's hometown and the longing for a relaxed simple life in the countryside.

Fei Ming indeed mentions Sappho by name in relation to dusk in the "Story" ("Gushi" 故事) chapter in *The Bridge*. He wrote:

Slowly, Xiaolin came back. His footsteps were indeed 'the sole sound in the empty valley' and gave the girl the very feeling of the spring wind of love. But no, it was dusk -- the time when man perhaps becomes the spirit of myriad things, as Sappho wrote in her poem.

慢慢的小林回来了，那个脚步才真是空谷足音哩，姑娘实在感到爱的春风了，不，是一个黄昏——这时，人，大概是为万物之灵了，Sappho 歌了一首诗。<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>In "My Man Is on Service" ("Junzi yu yi" 君子于役) in "Guofeng, Wangfeng" 国风，王风 in *The Book of Songs*, a dusk scene is also linked with the image of homecoming. The poem expresses the feeling of a country woman whose husband is away on service. In a similar way to Sappho's lines quoted by Fei Ming, it depicts sheep coming back to their home in the evening. The first half of the poem goes:

My man is on service (君子于役，)  
For how long no one knows. (不知其期。)  
Oh, when will he return? (曷至哉？)  
The fowls are roosting on their perches, (鸡栖于埭，)  
Another day is done, (日之夕矣，)  
Down the hill come cattle and sheep; (羊牛下来。)  
But my man is on service (君子于役，)  
And how can I forget him? (如之何勿思？)

The English translation is from *Selections from the "Book of Songs"*, trans. Yang Xianyi, Gladys Yang and Hu Shiguang (Beijing: Panda Books, 1983), p. 40.

<sup>68</sup>*Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 361. The word "Sappho" is in English in the original text. An attempt was made to find a poem of Sappho's in which the image of dusk is used to suggest the time when "man becomes the spirit of myriad things", as Fei Ming writes here. The one which came closest was the poem entitled "Rest", which is about the sheltering night rather than dusk: "The night closed their eyes / and then night poured down / black sleep

Zhou Zuoren suggests how the image of dusk, the idea of harmony, and a sad atmosphere fit together in Fei Ming's stories. In his postscript to Fei Ming's second collection of stories, *The Peach Orchard*, Zhou writes:

They are always surrounded by a sad air. No matter how old or young, boorish or smart, all the characters in Mr Fei Ming's stories move in this kind of sad air, which is like the air at dusk when the living or nonliving all disappear in its hazy evening colour, with a feeling of intimacy and harmony with each other. On this point, Mr Fei Ming's hermitic tendency seems very strong.

他们的身边总围绕着悲哀的空气。废名君小说中的人物，不论老的少的，村的俏的，都在这一种空气中行动，好象是在黄昏天气，在这时候朦胧暮色之中一切生物无生物都消失在里面，都觉得互相亲近，互相和解。在这一点上废名君的隐逸性似乎是很占了势力。<sup>69</sup>

Zhou's explanation of dusk reminds us of the Daoist idea of everything being equal. Dusk is the transient time when everything seems to melt away together in the waning daylight just before becoming totally invisible in the darkness of night. It is also reminiscent of the Chan Buddhist idea of everything being nothing. During the very short period of time between dusk and night, one could perceive the dramatic changing of things discernible and active into things indiscernible and still. One might feel that all things flow and nothing is permanent, and that what one perceives is only a

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upon their lids." See Willis Barnstone, trans., *Sappho and the Greek Lyric Poets*, p. 88.

<sup>69</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Taoyuan ba", *Kuyuzhai xubawen* (Shanghai: Tianma shudian, 1934), pp. 130-133.

phantom of one's mind-heart.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps this is why Zhou considers the image of dusk as 'hermitic' and finds "a sad air" in Fei Ming's stories because of the idea of transience which the image conveys.

Fei Ming indeed sometimes associates dusk with the passage of time. For example, in the "Dusk" chapter of *The Bridge*:

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<sup>70</sup>Fei Ming articulates such an idea in his poem, "April 28th, Dusk" ("Siyue ershibari huanghun" 四月二十八日黄昏) which is collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 301:

The electric-lamp post on the street  
A lamp, then another.  
A child carrying a willow twig in his hand  
Looks at the sparrow flying in the sky,  
A lamp, then another.  
A stone is also a lamp.  
A dog at the roadside is also a lamp.  
A blind man is also a lamp.  
A beggar is also a lamp.  
His starving eyes  
Are also lamps, also lamps.  
At dusk stars have begun to appear in the sky,  
A lamp, then another.

街上的电灯柱  
一个灯一个灯。  
小孩子手上拿了杨柳枝  
看天上的燕子飞，  
一个灯一个灯。  
石头也是灯。  
道旁犬也是灯。  
盲人也是灯。  
叫化子也是灯。  
饥饿的眼睛  
也是灯也是灯。  
黄昏天上的星出现了，  
一个灯一个灯。

Here, Fei Ming effaces the differences between man and nature, and various divisions in everyday life such as those between rich and poor or lucky and unlucky. He equalizes everything under the image of 'a lamp' and looks at each of them affectionately as elements which form a total picture of a lonely yet somewhat sheltering world in dusk. In fact, Fei Ming tends to use the image of 'a lamp' (灯) to suggest spirit or soul in some of his poems and this one could be considered as one of them. In this poem, 'dusk' is described atmospherically as the time when everything harmonizes together.

He really had to thank his Mute Third Uncle. Now deep in thought, enjoying the beauty of this dusk, -- If Xizhu had gone before Mute Third Uncle had arrived, how unsettled would he have felt? But he did not know how to 'thank someone', only how to ponder and enjoy himself. A change of mind is passing you by without a word or sign, just like time elapsing.

他真应该感谢他的三哑叔。他此刻沉在深思里，游于这黄昏的美之中，——当细竹去了，三哑未来，他是怎样的无著落呵。但他不知道感谢，只是深思，只是享受。心境之推移，正同时间推移是一样，推移了而并不向你打一个招呼。<sup>71</sup>

In this passage, images of dusk and changing thoughts are paired and their fleeting quality is emphasized. This kind of association of dusk and impermanence can also be seen in classical Chinese literature. It is possible that Fei Ming was influenced particularly by one of his favourite poets, Li Shangyin. In his essay, "On Chickens" ("Fu de ji" 赋得鸡), Fei Ming suggested that the scenes at sunset in Li Shangyin's poems bring back memories (即景生情) and touch a chord in one's heart (多有感触).<sup>72</sup> Hans H. Frankel illustrates 'evening' as one of the topoi that are frequently associated with the passage of time in Tang poetry, evening being the time of the day that brings to mind termination and decline.<sup>73</sup> Frankel also points out that a sunset is one of the natural settings employed in Tang poetry to express the passage of time.<sup>74</sup> When Fei Ming annotated Li Shangyin's poem,

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<sup>71</sup>Qiao (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 201.

<sup>72</sup>Fei Ming, "Fu de ji" [first published in *Shijie ribao fukan*, *Mingzhu*, No. 65 (5 December 1936)], *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 353.

<sup>73</sup>Hans H. Frankel, "The Contemplation of the Past in T'ang Poetry", *Perspectives on the T'ang*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Dennis Twitchett (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 345-365.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid. James Liu also wrote on Chinese traditional poetry: "The falling of spring petals, the withering of autumn leaves, the glimmering of the last rays of the setting sun -- all these invariably remind the sensitive Chinese poet of 'Time's winged chariot' and arouse apprehensions of the passing away of his own youth and the onset of old age and death." See James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, p. 50. Mori Hiroyuki 森博行 also states that from *Chuci* 楚辞, the

"Southeast" ("Dongnan" 东南) in his essay, he also mentioned the idea of passing time.<sup>75</sup>

### 'Peach' trees and Fei Ming's illustration of the transience of his rural world

Fei Ming also indicates the fragility of the rural world he creates by using the image of 'peach' trees. In traditional Chinese poems, for example, "Beautiful Peach Blossoms" ("Taoyao" 桃夭) from the *The Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 诗经), "Ode to a Visitor in the Imperial Garden" ("Yong yuanzhong youren" 咏苑中游人) by Xiao Zixian (萧子显, 489-537) and "Girl's Face and Peach Blossom" ("Renmian taohua" 人面桃花) by Cui Hu (崔护), the beauty of a woman is often compared to and contrasted with peach blossoms. Fei Ming also associates the image of peach blossom or peaches with his young female characters in "The Peach Orchard" and *The Bridge*. Furthermore, he depicts peach trees in his rural peaceful world in these stories, which inevitably reminds readers of the Land of Peach Blossom in "The Peach-Blossom Spring"<sup>76</sup> ("Taohuayuan ji" 桃花源记) of Tao Yuanming. However, Fei

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setting sun became the symbol of the passage of time, and that the sadness of human mortality was conveyed by the idea that nobody can stop the sun from setting, that is, stopping time's flow. See Mori, "Gi, Shin shi ni okeru 'yūhi' ni tsuite" 魏, 晋诗における『夕日』について, quoted in Tokura Hidemi 户仓英美, *Shijintachi no Jikū -- Kanfu kara Tōshi e -- 诗人たちの時空 -- 漢賦から唐詩へ --* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1988), p. 77.

<sup>75</sup>Fei Ming, "Fu de ji", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 353. In the first chapter, pp. 5-10, of her book, *Modern Chinese Poetry*, Michelle Yeh points out the 'modernity' of Fei Ming's expression of loneliness in his poem, "Jietou" (街头 "Street Corner": this poem is also mentioned in Chapter One of this thesis) in contrast with Li Shangyin's traditional method of expressing melancholy in "Leyouyuan" (乐游原 "Leyou Height"). However, in his pastoral stories, Fei Ming seems to employ the traditional images of dusk, flowing water and peach blossom.

<sup>76</sup>The English title is taken from *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien*, trans. James Robert Hightower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 254.

Ming's 'land of peach trees' is tinged with melancholy, unlike Tao Yuanming's Land of Peach Blossom.<sup>77</sup>

In "The Peach Orchard", he reveals his world of spiritual beauty in the peach orchard. However, as it is set not in spring but in autumn, when the peach trees no longer bear blossom or fruit, and its heroine is ill, the story is tainted with a morbid atmosphere. Fei Ming insinuates the frailty of the heroine and the transience of his desirable world through his description of the smashing of the glass peaches at the end of the story and by locating the peach orchard next to an execution ground.

In the chapter, "On the Way" ("Lushang" 路上) in *The Bridge*, Fei Ming depicts a scene in which Qinzi and Xizhu cross a bridge towards peach blossoms over a clear river. He associates the flowers with the girls' youth and beauty and then contrasts them with the flowing river. He describes Qinzi's crossing the bridge as: "Flowing together with the water, her smiling face upon the bridge." (与水并是流——桥上她的笑貌。) <sup>78</sup> The river flowing forever without returning is a favourite image for the passing of time in Tang poetry, as Frankel points out.<sup>79</sup> Fei Ming suggests here the evanescence of the girl's youth and beauty and also of the present happiness, by the use of overlapping images: flowers -- a girl's smiling face -- the flowing river.

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<sup>77</sup>Except that it cannot be found again, Tao Yuanming's "Taohuayuan" is depicted as a delightful, faultless place where people are "joyous in their ample happiness" (怡然有余乐).

<sup>78</sup>*Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 235.

<sup>79</sup>Hans H. Frankel, "The Contemplation of the Past in T'ang Poetry", *Perspectives on the T'ang*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Dennis Twitchett, pp. 345-365.

In the chapter, "The Peach Wood" of *The Bridge*, Fei Ming describes the peach wood where Xiaolin and Xizhu, who are in love with each other, meet without Qinzi's intervention and pick peaches freely. Perhaps realising the fragility of his fantastical world, Fei Ming adds the following explanation of the location, in the words of the narrator; "The author has not seen this place, this peach wood, which has been transformed into a paddy field. Now all there is to see is a small flowing river ... Peaches do not have a long life." (桃树林这地方, 著者未及见, 改种了田, 只看得见一条小河流 ... 桃之为果是不能经历岁月的了。)80

The general characteristics of Fei Ming's country stories have now been discussed. Most of his country stories contain autobiographical elements. Those in the first person express the urbanized narrator's nostalgia for the rural past, often invoking the memory of people to whom he was close in his childhood, especially his girlfriend. Those in the third person present a sketch of the peaceful old-fashioned everyday life of the 'ordinary' countryfolk who live in harmony with nature. Fei Ming only hints at the negative side of their lives, such as bad fortune and material deficiency, and focuses on their self-contained good personalities, spiritual way of life and the beauty of nature which surrounds them. Such approach may derive from Daoist/Chan Buddhist influences.

Fei Ming's country stories are usually tinged with sadness. This seems to stem from his aesthetic view of death, which is embodied in

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<sup>80</sup>*Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 371.

his indications of human mortality which contrast with nature's constancy and self-renewal. This view also appears in his leitmotifs, such as tombs, dusk and peach trees, which suggest the transience of human life, passing time, or happy situations.

The next chapter will examine further influences found in Fei Ming's country stories, narrowing the focus down onto the specific nature of their glorification of the country life -- the pastoral.

## Chapter Four

### The Pastoral Elements in Fei Ming's Stories

Previous chapters have referred to Fei Ming's stories about the countryside under the general term 'country stories'. Now that their tendency to eulogize the rural past or peaceful life of countryfolk has been identified, it is perhaps appropriate to call them 'pastoral' stories. The 'pastoral' genre is one that has often been discussed, and it is necessary to clarify the definition of the term. This is especially important as it is an English term which is being applied to Chinese literature. It is indispensable to consider first the tradition of the 'pastoral' in Europe, its equivalent in China, and then present a working definition of 'pastoral' to be used in this examination of Fei Ming's stories.

#### Defining 'pastoral'

The pastoral tradition in Europe emerged in the first half of the third century BC with the works of Theocritus (316-260 BC), an Arcadian of Sicily, who later worked in the highly sophisticated and urbanised city of Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> In his allusive, polished verse, *Idylls*, Theocritus wrote fondly, and with a faithfulness to detail, of his own childhood memories of the simple life in the countryside of Sicily and on the island of Cos.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Heath-Stubbs, *The Pastoral* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>Michael Squires, *The Pastoral Novel -- Studies in George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974, second printing, 1975), p. 24.

Virgil (70-19 BC), Theocritus' first great successor, began to separate the pastoral from actual rural life in his *Eclogues*: his shepherds are complex characters, and his landscape becomes distant and imaginary.<sup>3</sup> Since Virgil, traditional pastoralists have consciously worked within a framework of generic expectation: the world free from toil and leisure, where music and laughter are unbroken.

As might be expected, with such a long tradition, the term 'pastoral' has been defined in many ways. Alexander Pope (1688-1744) claimed pastoral to be 'a representation of Innocence'<sup>4</sup>, while his contemporary, Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), saw it as a decadent affectation of crudeness.<sup>5</sup> Amongst more modern critics, William Empson defined pastoral in 1935 as essentially the 'process of putting the complex into the simple.'<sup>6</sup> Renato Poggioli's idea of the traditional pastoral in 1957 can be summarised as: Pastoral, appearing whenever metropolitan life grows hard to bear, rejects ambition, opposes wealth, urges a self-contained community, and tends to create an economic idyll of favourable weather, bountiful nature, and freedom from work.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Alexander Pope, *Guardian* #40 (1713) in *The Tatler and The Guardian Complete in One Volume* (Edinburgh: William Nimmo & Co., 1880), p. 59, quoted in Steven Marx, *Youth Against Age -- Generational Strife in Renaissance Poetry* (New York, Berne, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985), p.3.

<sup>5</sup>Samuel Johnson, "Pastoral Poetry I", *Rambler* #36, July 21, 1750, in *Eighteenth Century Critical Essays*, ed. Scott Elledge (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961), II, p. 579, quoted in Steven Marx, *Youth Against Age*, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup>William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (first published 1935, rpt. London: The Hogarth Press, 1986), p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>Renato Poggioli, "The Oaten Flute", *Harvard Library Bulletin*, II (1957), 147-84, quoted in Michael Squires, *The Pastoral Novel*, p. 7.

On the whole, critics agree that in its beginnings, pastoral was essentially a vehicle of reaction against urban culture and refinement, and that pastoralists looked back with nostalgia on their early rural experience from an urban, sophisticated perspective.<sup>8</sup> The rural-urban contrast is considered to be an important element of pastoral<sup>9</sup>, which also takes the subordinate forms of nature versus art, past versus present, and simplicity versus refinement and complexity.<sup>10</sup>

In his book on George Eliot (1819-1880), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) and D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), Michael Squires suggests that the first comparatively modern literary figure to demonstrate the possibilities of the pastoral form adapted to realistic subject matter was William Wordsworth (1770-1850).<sup>11</sup> He maintains that the pastoral novel continued to appear beyond the eighteenth-century date conventionally ascribed to the death of traditional pastoral<sup>12</sup>, and mentions three major changes from the traditional pastoral to the modern pastoral: the first and most significant change in the transformation of the pastoral impulse is the recognition, even glorification of hard work. A second significant change is the shift to the use of prose rather than poetry, in works inspired by the pastoral impulse. A final change occurs with the virtual abandonment of allegorical uses of landscape and character -- an

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<sup>8</sup>Michael Squires, *The Pastoral Novel*, p. 23 and p. 12. See also, Peter V. Marinelli, *Pastoral* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1971), p. 9.

<sup>9</sup>Peter V. Marinelli, *Pastoral*, p. 12. John Heath-Stubbs, *The Pastoral*, p. 2. Michael Squires, *The Pastoral Novel*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup>Michael Squires, *The Pastoral Novel*, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 213.

interest less in a perfect and pure world of the imagination, and more in a world of imagined reality that depends upon verifiable local details.<sup>13</sup>

In China, the literary tradition of eulogizing the rural simple life and the beauty of nature emerged in the Wei-Jin period (220-420), a time of political chaos.<sup>14</sup> Unlike the beginning of the Western pastoral, it was not the authors' nostalgia for their early rural

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-49.

<sup>14</sup>Mekada Makoto 目加田誠, "Chūgoku bungei shiso niokeru 'shizen' to yūkoto" 中国文艺思想における'自然'ということ, *Chūgoku bungaku ronkō -- Mekada Makoto chosakushū, daiyonkan* 中国文学论考 -- 目加田誠著作集第四卷 (Tokyo: Ryūkei shosha, 1985), p. 436. Also, *Zhongguo wenxueshi, yi* 中国文学史, 一, ed. You Guo'en 游国恩, Wang Qi 王起, Xiao Difei 萧涤非, Ji Zhenhuai 季镇淮, and Fei Zhengang 费振刚 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1979), p. 203 and p. 251. Donald Holzman writes that before the Wei-Jin period, there were Chinese literary works which expressed their authors' melancholy inspired by failure in the political world and consequent disgust with the social world. For example, in "Li Sao" 离骚 in *Chuci* 楚辞, Qu Yuan (屈原, c. B.C. 340 - c. B.C. 278) tries to seek peace among the immortals in heaven or in some exotic land of exile. See Donald Holzman, *Poetry and Politics -- The Life and Works of Juan Chi A. D. 210-263* (Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 187. Furthermore, Hashimoto Shitagau 橋本循 mentions "Feiyou xiansheng lun" 非有先生论 by Dongfang Shuo (东方朔, B. C. 154-B. C. 93), "Gui tian fu" 归田赋 by Zhang Heng (张衡, 78-139) and "Le zhi lun" 乐志论 by Zhong Changtong (仲长统, 179-219) as works which expressed the joy of country life and pessimistic world views before Ruan Ji's time. See Hashimoto Shitagau, "Chūgoku bungaku to sansui shisō" 中国文学と山水思想, *Chūgoku bungaku shisō kanken* 中国文学思想管见 (Kyoto: Hōyū shoten, 1982), pp. 1-60. However, due to the 'inferiority' in number and quality of these works, it seems to be a more common practice among scholars of Chinese classics to name the Wei-Jin period as the beginning of Chinese pastoral (literary) tradition. An example of this would be: Maeno Naoaki 前野直彬, ed. *Chūgoku bungaku shi* 中国文学史 (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppan kai, 1975, rpt. 1981), pp. 69-74. Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎 also suggests the time of Tao Yuanming as the beginning of Chinese literature eulogizing the beauty of nature. See Yoshikawa Kōjirō, "Chūgoku bungaku nyūmon" 中国文学入门, *Yoshikawa Kōjirō kōenshū* 吉川幸次郎講演集 (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1974, rpt. 1986), pp. 114-115. Aoki Masaru 青木正兒 also gives a similar opinion in "Dōkateki bungei shichō, yon, kōtō shugi to shizen'ai" 道家的文艺思潮, 四 高蹈主義と自然愛, collected in *Aoki Masaru zenshū, daiyikkan* 青木正兒全集 第一卷 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1969), pp. 204-207 that from the end of the Jin, the pastoral literature rose. Obi Kōichi 小尾郊一 also gives the same period as the beginning of pastoral literature in his *Chūgoku no inton shisō -- Tō Enmei no kokoro no kiseki* 中国の隠遁思想 - 陶明の心の軌跡 (Tokyo: Chūkō shinsho, 1988), pp. 7-11.

experience, but rather a reaction against political repression and prevailing insidious intrigues among intellectuals to gain public success as officials at court ('*rushi*' 入世, 'enter the world'). As the Chinese literati were precisely the ones who had been trained to serve as government officials at the centre of the civilized world, they could not help being conscious of the Confucian ideal of 'rising in the world'. There were, naturally, difficulties to be faced in achieving this ideal, hence the popularity of a second ideal, influenced this time by Daoism, of leading a peaceful hermitic private life, of standing aloof from worldly affairs ('*chushi*' 出世). The Chinese literati tried to draw closer to nature for relief from frustrated ambition and to ease their stress. Consequently, poems reflecting such attitudes were composed. For example, one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, Ruan Ji (阮籍, 210-263), who was frustrated in politics by the presence of a corrupt, usurping government, and was incapable of finding any lasting joy in social life and, ultimately sceptical of achieving immortality and unsatisfied with a purely meditative, inactive life of mystical meditation, projected these feelings onto the abundant descriptions of natural scenery in his poems.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Donald Holzman suggests that Ruan Ji's 'half-prose' (Holzman's term), "The Biography of Master Great Man" ("Daren xiansheng zhuan" 大人先生传) can be "considered the first declaration of utopian anarchism in Chinese history". See Holzman, *Poetry and Politics -- The Life and Works of Juan Chi A. D. 210-263*, p. 189. According to Hashimoto Shitagau, other poems of similar dates which described the beauty of rural landscape or sought after immortals were "Xianju fu" 闲居赋 by Fan Yue (潘岳, 247-300), "Zhao yin shi" 招隐诗 by Zuo Si (左思, c. 250-c. 305) and by Lu Ji (陆机, 261-303), and "You xian shi" 游仙诗 by Guo Pu (郭璞, 276-324). See Hashimoto, "Chūgoku bungaku to sansui shisō", *Chūgoku bungaku shisō kanken*, pp. 1-60.

Chan teaching, which advocated the calm spirit as supreme and everything in the material world as nothing, and encouraged salvation of the soul, was also meeting the Chinese intellectuals' tastes and needs for their ideal private life, and gradually penetrated further into the mainstream of intellectual thought.<sup>16</sup> After Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun (谢灵运, 385-433) had established the tradition of poems on mountains and rivers, fields and gardens ('shanshui tianyuan shi' 山水田园诗), those poets who closely associated with Buddhist priests followed them as the major successors of this tradition: Meng Haoran (孟浩然, 689 or 691-740), Wang Wei (王维, 701-761 or 698-759), Chang Jian (常建, 708-765), Wei Yingwu (韦应物, 737-792), Liu Zongyuan (柳宗元, 773-819) and others.

Just as the European traditional pastoral came to be little more than a product of the poets' imagination, with no root in any actual involvement in rural society, the Chinese traditional pastoral after Tao Yuanming became, fundamentally, the expression of the hermitic 'ideal' of the literati and officialdom (士大夫) who were born into the ruling class and who had no experience of physical agricultural

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<sup>16</sup>Ogasawara Hirotoishi 小笠原博慧 maintains that Chinese pastoral poems arose when Daoist and Buddhist thoughts were linked together, in "Rikuchōshi niokeru shizen reisan" 六朝诗における自然礼讚, published in *Hanzoku no shisō to bungaku -- Chūgoku bungaku no sekai* 反俗の思想と文学 -- 中国文学の世界 (Tokyo: Kazama shoyin, 1977), pp. 118-124. The early history of Chan in China remains obscure. E. Zürcher wrote (p. 73) in "Buddhism in China" collected in *The Legacy of China*, ed. Raymond Dawson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 56-79: "The origin of this [Chan] or 'Meditation' school is obscured by legend." Tu Wei-ming suggests in "Ch'an in China: A Reflective Interpretation" (pp. 9-10) that Chan Buddhism began during the time of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (5-6th C.). On the other hand, Ge Zhaoguang, in his *Chan zong yu Zhongguo wenhua* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1986, p. 10), states that the Chan Buddhist view can be traced back to the Jin period (265-420).

work.<sup>17</sup> In other words, the scholar's retreat did not only represent the gentleman's appreciation of nature, but also became a symbol of their cultivated aspiration.<sup>18</sup>

Returning to Fei Ming's stories about the countryside, there are two prominent characteristics similar to those of the 'modern pastoral' suggested by Michael Squires. Firstly, Fei Ming wrote stories based upon his own early rural experience after he had grown accustomed to an urban perspective. This is apparent from the fact that the characters and settings in some of his stories are modelled upon real people whom he knew in his childhood. Secondly, before Fei Ming's time, the Chinese tradition of eulogizing life in the country and the beauty of nature was mostly seen in poems and essays.

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<sup>17</sup>Lu Xun wrote cynically about the traditional Chinese pastoral poets at the beginning of his short story, "Fengbo" (风波, "A Passing Storm"), published in 1920: "Just then, a pleasure boat full of scholars passed by on the river. Catching sight of the idyllic scene while sipping their wine, these lions of literature lyrically proclaimed, 'Not a care in the world, a true example of the pleasures of peasant life!' The words of these literary lions, however, did not entirely tally with reality, but that was only because they had not heard what old Mrs. Ninepounder was saying." (河里驶过文人的酒船, 文豪见了, 大发诗兴, 说, "无思无虑, 这真是田家乐呵!" 但文豪的话有些不合事实, 就因为他们没有听到九斤老太的话。) The translation is from *Lu Xun: Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, trans. William A. Lyell (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), p. 77.

<sup>18</sup>Li Chi refers to the development of the traditional Chinese intellectual's dualistic outlook on life, that is, "the moral world ruled by Confucian dictates" and "the infinite, free world of nature". See Li Chi, "The Changing Concept of the Recluse in Chinese Literature", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Volume 24, 1962-1963 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1963), pp. 234-247. Yue Daiyun also points out in a discussion of a nineteenth century work, *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*: "It was in the mountains and streams of China, vast, magnificent, and rich in variety, that intellectuals dissatisfied with the realities of life escaped and found sustenance for their minds and spirits ... The 'joys of mountain and stream' became an extremely important factor in their lives. Their roaming was not merely an appreciation of nature; it was primarily an expression of their ideal of life." See Yue Daiyun, "2. Intellectuals at an Impasse and the Collapse of Feudal Society: *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*", *Intellectuals in Chinese Fiction* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1988), p. 47.

The definition of the pastoral novel given by Squires matches the nature of Fei Ming's stories about the countryside very well. This definition is therefore used here when describing this subgenre of the novel, which recreates country life by using elements and techniques of traditional pastoral. These are, principally, the contrast between city and country, the examination of rural life from both urban and rural viewpoints, the implied withdrawal from complexity to simplicity, intense nostalgia for the past and consequent criticism of modern life, and the creation of a circumscribed and remote pastoral world. This circumscribed pastoral world reveals harmony between man and nature, idyllic contentment, and a sympathetic realism<sup>19</sup> which combines both idealization and realism, and in which country life, stripped of its coarsest features, is made palatable to urban society.<sup>20</sup>

The question now arises about the nature of Fei Ming's pastoralism. After the May Fourth Movement, foreign ideas had a huge impact on Chinese intellectuals. It is therefore necessary to examine the type of foreign pastoral influences that can be seen in Fei Ming's stories, but also how traditionally Chinese the pastoralism in his stories is.

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<sup>19</sup>Squires writes that he intends the term 'realism' to "suggest a literary focus on the actual, the observable, the verifiable; the ordinary, the everyday, the typical, the representative; the truthful; the normal in human experience". See Michael Squires, *The Pastoral Novel*, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 213.

## The influence of George Eliot

In "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", Fei Ming wrote that after becoming a university student, he began to think of writing about his childhood. In this he was inspired by *The Mill On the Floss* by George Eliot.<sup>21</sup> *The Mill on the Floss* is set in a prosperous small trading town, St Ogg's, on the confluence of the Ripple and Floss Rivers, in the years 1829-1839. The novel centres around Maggie and Tom, children of the honest but uneducated miller, Mr Tulliver, and his wife, who live at Dorlcote Mill. The novel, to put it most simply, is about how Tom and Maggie grow up and their different ways of life in a closed provincial society with its own traditions and customs.

The first two books of *The Mill on the Floss* revolve around Maggie and Tom's childhood. Lawrence Lerner referred to this part of *The Mill on the Floss* as "perhaps the most vivid and compelling childhood story in English fiction".<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the vivid portrayal of the rural landscape and the feeling of childhood is probably the most successful part of the novel. George Eliot describes her strong faith in the value of childhood in passages in the early part of the novel. For example:

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<sup>21</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yi hou, di liu zhang, jiu shidai de jiaoyu", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 528. Feng Jiannan, "Shuo Fei Ming de shengping", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 2, 1984, p. 359. Also, see Chapter One, pp. 26-27 of this thesis.

<sup>22</sup>Lawrence Lerner, "Which is the Way Home?" [extract from *The Truth-tellers* (London, 1967), pp. 270-278], collected in *George Eliot: The Mill on the Floss and Silas Marner*, ed. R. P. Draper (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1977, 5th rpt. 1990), p. 162.

We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it ... What novelty is worth that sweet monotony where everything is known and *loved* because it is known? ... These familiar flowers, these well-remembered bird-notes, this sky ... these are the mother tongue of our imagination, the language that is laden with all the subtle inextricable associations the fleeting hours of our childhood left behind them.<sup>23</sup>

She also expresses her appreciation of children's innocence in *The Mill on the Floss*:

While the possible troubles of Maggie's future were occupying her father's mind, she herself was tasting only the bitterness of the present. Childhood has no forebodings; but then, it is soothed by no memories of outlived sorrow.<sup>24</sup>

Fei Ming expressed a very similar view in his essay, "Wuzu Temple": that as an adult, he had often felt sympathy with children and admired their purity and carefree innocence.<sup>25</sup>

In the chapters, "Farewell Lanterns" and "On the Way" in *The Bridge*, Fei Ming describes the scenes from the viewpoints of the children, Xiaolin and Qinzi, which brings the reader's viewpoint level with the children's and makes the reader feel as if Fei Ming were entering their minds. Such an adoption of the children's viewpoint by Fei Ming seems to echo George Eliot's suggestion of recovering childhood feelings in *The Mill on the Floss*:

What could she do but sob? ... Very trivial, perhaps, this anguish seems to weather-worn mortals who have to think of

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<sup>23</sup>George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, Book First, Chapter 5 (first published 1860; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin books Ltd, 1988), p. 94.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, Book First, Chapter 9, p. 145.

<sup>25</sup>"Wuzisi", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 361. See Chapter Three p. 116 of this thesis.

Christmas bills, dead loves and broken friendships, but it was not less bitter to Maggie - perhaps it was even more bitter - than what we are fond of calling antithetically the real troubles of mature life ... Is there any one who can recover the experience of his childhood, not merely with a memory of what he did and what happened to him, of what he liked and disliked when he was in frock and trousers, but with an intimate penetration, a revived consciousness of what he felt then- ... Surely if we could recall that early bitterness, and the dim guesses, the strangely perspectiveless conception of life that gave the bitterness its intensity, we should not pooh-pooh the griefs of our children.<sup>26</sup>

It is not clear whether Fei Ming was stimulated by the fact that *The Mill on the Floss* has a strong autobiographical quality.<sup>27</sup> It is perhaps more likely that what triggered his inspiration was George Eliot's positive view on childhood as well as her realistic description of the unhurried everyday life of humble people in a circumscribed rural community where life seems simpler and where man lives closer to nature.

### **The influence of Thomas Hardy**

In the preface to *Selected Stories of Fei Ming*, Fei Ming referred to Thomas Hardy's influence, especially on *The Bridge*.<sup>28</sup> He also mentioned in his essay, "Chinese Writings" that he had come to notice

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<sup>26</sup>George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, Book First, Chapter 7, pp. 122-123.

<sup>27</sup>As for the autobiographical quality in *The Mill on the Floss*, see A. S. Byatt, "Introduction", *The Mill on the Floss* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin books Ltd, 1988), pp. 7-11. Also Barbara Hardy, "Life and Art in *The Mill on the Floss*" [extract from *Critical Essays on George Eliot*, ed. Barbara Hardy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 42-58], and Leslie Stephen, "The 'Beautiful Soul' and the Commonplace Environment in *The Mill on the Floss*" [Chapter 6 of *George Eliot* (London, 1902), pp. 86-104], collected in *George Eliot: The Mill on the Floss and Silas Marner*, ed. R. P. Draper, p. 170 and p. 73 respectively.

<sup>28</sup>Fei Ming, "Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan, xu", *Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan* (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1957), p. 3.

the pessimistic beauty of the landscape descriptions in poems by Du Fu and Yu Xin after reading Hardy's novels. Fei Ming wrote that he always felt that Hardy's landscape descriptions were beautiful because they were filled with a particular, strong local colour.<sup>29</sup>

As there is no record telling which of Hardy's novels Fei Ming actually read, it is perhaps most appropriate to focus on the early ones which are highly acclaimed as 'pastoral novels'; *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

*Under the Greenwood Tree*, published in 1872, centres around the romance of the tranter's son, Dick Dewy, and his fellow village musicians of the 'Mellstock Quire'. Set in the past, the rural community is self-sufficient and peaceful, and relatively isolated from urban culture. *Far from the Madding Crowd*, published in 1874, also presents a nostalgic portrayal of the idealised community of peasants, seasonal work, landscape and rural festivities in Wessex. The main character, Gabriel Oak, is a shepherd and the novel tells of the intricate relationships centred around Bathsheba Everdene.

In these novels, Hardy depicts man as a small part of the landscape as a whole. As Margaret Drabble comments: "To Hardy, the whole of the natural world has a strong organic unity, which he apprehends at times with a mystic clarity: borderlines are blurred, and man becomes part of nature."<sup>30</sup> For instance, in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the reader first meets Dick and the members of the band as figures in a vivid description of nature, before being

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<sup>29</sup>Fei Ming, "Zhongguo wenzhang", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 344. Also, see Chapter Three pp. 130-131 of this thesis.

<sup>30</sup>Margaret Drabble, "Hardy and the Natural World", *The Genius of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Margaret Drabble (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), p. 164.

introduced to their characters and roles. The first paragraph of the novel reads:

To dwellers in a wood almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its feature. At the passing of the breeze the fir-trees sob and moan no less distinctly than they rock; the holly whistles as it battles with itself; the ash hisses amid its quiverings; the beech rustles while its flat boughs rise and fall. And winter, which modifies the note of such trees as shed their leaves, does not destroy its individuality.<sup>31</sup>

Then, 'a man' walking up Mellstock Lane appears. He is heard singing:

With the rose and the lily  
And the daffadowndilly,  
The lads and the lasses a-sheep-shearing go.

The 'man' is the 'hero' of the story, Dick Dewy, and Hardy first introduces only the silhouette of the upper-half of Dick's body against the night sky. John F. Danby points out that it is one of the imaginative moments which constantly recur in Hardy's work and the description is symbolic of age-old Man in general.<sup>32</sup>

From this beginning, Hardy endows the story with universality and indicates man's individual unimportance and his transience by the image of leaves on a tree. He implies that there is nothing unutterably special in one's private romance: the individual love-

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<sup>31</sup>Thomas Hardy, *Under the Greenwood Tree or The Mellstock Quire -- A Rural Painting of the Dutch School* (first published 1872; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1978, rpt. 1985), p. 39.

<sup>32</sup>John F. Danby, "The Individual and the Universal" [ Source: essay, "Under the Greenwood Tree", in *Critical Quarterly*, I, no. 1 (Spring 1959), pp. 5-13], collected in *Thomas Hardy: Three Pastoral Novels*, ed. R. P. Draper (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1987), p. 91.

story of Dick Dewy and Fancy Day is like the foliage on the trees, and they themselves are merely trees in a large forest. The significance of their story is that it has all happened before, whenever there have been men and women, and that it will continue to happen in similar ways so long as:

The lads and the lasses a-sheep-shearing go.<sup>33</sup>

Hardy also suggests man's unimportance in *Far from the Madding Crowd* by using the same image of a leaf. For example:

'We thought we heard a hand pawing about the door for the bobbin, but weren't sure 'twere not a dead leaf blowed across', said another.<sup>34</sup>

In both *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far from the Madding Crowd*, before a new character is introduced, nature is first seen at a distance, and this distance is subsequently shortened as the reader becomes more involved with the character.<sup>35</sup>

Hardy's technique of depicting a tiny figure with vast nature as a background shares a similarity with that of traditional Chinese poetry and landscape painting. For example, in poems by Tao Yuanming and Wang Wei, the 'presence of the poet is withdrawn or unobtrusively submerged in the total picture'.<sup>36</sup> The same can be

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>34</sup>Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (first published 1874; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1978, rpt. 1985), p. 103.

<sup>35</sup>Andrew Enstice, *Thomas Hardy: Landscape of the Mind* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1979), p. 58.

<sup>36</sup>James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, p. 49. Liu also points out the similarity of the views on nature between the traditional Chinese poets and Hardy. He wrote (p. 49): "In the first place, Nature to these Chinese poets [such as Tao Qian and Wang Wei - A. Kudo] is not a physical manifestation of its

said of the traditional Chinese landscape paintings under the influence of the Daoist view of nature. Daoists look on man not as the measure of all things but as an inseparable part of the great Universe in which he exists.<sup>37</sup> Also, in traditional Chinese landscape painting, nature represents all-encompassing existence, with changes and movements, without beginning or end, and without boundaries. Humanity, as part of nature, is just one among myriad kinds of living creatures. Predetermined to have the ability to think and feel, and to effect minor diversions within the great changes and movements, humans remain slaves to basic drives, incapable of escaping from the life-cycle of birth, aging, sickness, and death.<sup>38</sup> It is from this kind of resonance between Hardy's idea of man at one with nature and Chinese Daoist principles that such a similarity in their approaches stems.<sup>39</sup>

Fei Ming also expresses the idea that man is only a small part of nature in *The Bridge*. For instance, in the chapter, "Honeysuckle" ("Jinyinhua" 金银花):

There were few people on the dyke. The chirrup chirrup of the cicadas was just like the leaves on the trees, so dense that it hid away this tiny child.

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Creator, as it is to Wordsworth, but something that is what it is by virtue of itself. The Chinese term for 'Nature' is [zi-ran], or 'Self-thus', and the Chinese mind seems content to accept Nature as a fact, without searching for a *primum mobile*. This concept of Nature somewhat resembles Thomas Hardy's 'Immanent Will', but without its rather sombre and gloomy associations."

<sup>37</sup>Maggie Keswick, *The Chinese Garden -- History, Art & Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1978), p. 13.

<sup>38</sup>Wucius Wong, *The Tao of Chinese Landscape Painting : Principles & Methods* (Hong Kong: Design Press, 1991), p. 14.

<sup>39</sup>This might be one of the reasons why Hardy's works were well received among Chinese modern writers.

坝上也很少行人，吱唔吱唔的蝉的声音，正同树叶子一样，那么密，把这小小一个人儿藏起来了。<sup>40</sup>

In *The Bridge* Fei Ming also, sometimes, describes the natural landscape at a distance, before introducing a character or going into an episode, as in the chapters: "Shijia Village" ("Shijiazhuang" 史家庄), "Island in the River", "Eulalias", "Sandy Shore", and "Willows".

### **The heritage of the traditional Chinese pastoral**

As indicated earlier, there are formal and thematic differences between Fei Ming's pastoral and the traditional Chinese pastoral. Fei Ming's pastoral is in the genre of fiction and based upon his own rural experience in his childhood. His pastoral world is not a complete cloud-cuckoo-land, for there are some unpleasant elements in regard to various characters' circumstances. Fei Ming does describe those who have lost their family, the disabled, and the poor. In fact, most of his characters are such unfortunate people. On the other hand, the traditional Chinese pastoral is in the genre of poetry and essays, and very often expresses a flawless world, not necessarily based upon the writer's own experience.

However, there are indeed several points which Fei Ming seems to have borrowed from the traditional Chinese pastoral. First of all, as already mentioned, he inherited the traditional Chinese approach towards nature, which centres round the Daoist view that the human being is only a small part of nature and not something opposing it.

Secondly, whether consciously or not, he seems to have borrowed some motifs from traditional Chinese pastoral. There are

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<sup>40</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 6.

some remarkable similarities between some scenes in Fei Ming's stories and those in traditional Chinese landscape painting, which was another form of the expression of the Chinese scholar-gentleman's Daoist, pastoral ideal. The Song dynasty painter, Han Zhuo (韩拙, active ca. 1095-1125) wrote:

Whenever painting figures, one should not use coarse, vulgar types, but value those that are pure and elegant and in lonely retirement ... Pictures of summer should be painted with figures that are peaceful and at ease in the sunlit and shaded spots of mountain groves; or travellers may be resting in waterside pavilions and rest-houses, and avoiding the heat of summer by getting the cool breezes.<sup>41</sup>

If we look at warm spring-or summer scenes in Fei Ming's pastoral stories, for instance in "Youzi", "My Neighbours", "A Washerwoman", "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove", "A Willow Tree at the Riverside", "The Water-chestnuts Marsh" and six chapters of *The Bridge* <sup>42</sup>, figures either resting or cooling in tree shades can be found.<sup>43</sup> For example, in "A Washerwoman":

The countryfolk selling firewood, who were resting their poles and relaxing in the shade of a willow near the bridge, often unexpectedly received a big cupful of cold tea from Li Ma ...  
卖柴的乡下人歇下担子在桥头一棵杨柳树下乘凉, 时常意外的得到李妈的一大杯凉茶 ...<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih ed., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 155.

<sup>42</sup>In the chapters, "Shizi de yingzi" 狮子的影子, "Songshu jiaoxia" 『松树脚下』, "Zonglü" 棕榈, "Lushang" 路上, "Chapu" 茶铺, and "Shu" 树.

<sup>43</sup>Zhou Zuoren noticed the frequency of such scenes in Fei Ming's stories. See Zhou Zuoren, "Zhulin de gushi xu", [first published in *Yu Si*, No. 48 (12 October 1925)], *Zhulin de gushi*, (Beijing: Beixin shuji, 1925), p. 1.

<sup>44</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Huanyimu", *Zhulin de gushi*, p. 62.

Here, Fei Ming's figures may not be exactly "pure and elegant and in lonely retirement" externally, as Han Zhuo suggests, but they are indeed "peaceful and at ease in the sunlit and shaded spots" and "resting in waterside" (= near the bridge) and "avoiding the heat of summer by getting the cool breezes".

There are some other seasonal scenes which Fei Ming depicts in his pastoral stories, and which also seem almost as if they had taken their motifs from traditional Chinese landscape painting. To take another example from Han Zhuo, he suggested that a landscape painting should be arranged as follows:

Pictures of spring should be painted with figures that are happy and at ease treading the grass in the countryside, sauntering along the green paths ... Depict fisherfolk singing ... Pictures of summer ... Depict figures playing in water and floating boats, washing near a river, fetching water from a well at dawn ... Pictures of autumn should be painted with mournful-looking figures gazing at the moon, or figures gathering water-chestnuts ...<sup>45</sup>

In the spring scenes in Fei Ming's fiction such as "Youzi", and the chapters, "Willows" and "On the Way" of *The Bridge*, his characters are also taking a walk on the fresh green grass. In the spring/summer scene in "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove", the main characters, Miss Third and her father are fishing in a river, singing. In "The Peach Orchard", Ah Mao looks up at a sky containing a half moon, remembering her late mother in autumn. In "The Water-chestnuts Marsh", there is a paragraph describing Deaf Chen gathering water-chestnuts in a boat. Although it is not known

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<sup>45</sup>Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih ed., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, p. 155.

whether or not Fei Ming actually studied the writings of Han Zhuo in particular, in these depictions of seasonal scenery in Fei Ming's stories, can be found a traditional Chinese pastoral element that seems to echo Han Zhuo's suggestions.

The third point which Fei Ming seems to have borrowed even more obviously from the traditional Chinese pastoral is his 'iconography'. In *The Bridge* Fei Ming sometimes skilfully quotes lines directly from Tang poems to invoke a serene peaceful atmosphere in the world of his own novel. For instance, the chapter "Palm Tree" ("Zonglü" 棕榈) begins with lines from "Springtime Sleep" ("Chunxiao" 春晓) by Meng Haoran:

"Springtime sleep: too deep to know dawn.

Everywhere, birds sing,"<sup>46</sup>

sang Xizhu. Before singing, she had stretched her arms out high, just as a white egret on an island in the river spreads its wings when it is going to fly, telling us she is about to wake up.

『春眠不觉晓，处处闻啼鸟。』细竹唱。未唱之先，彷彿河洲上的白鹭要飞的时候展一展翅膀，已经高高的伸一伸手告诉她要醒了。<sup>47</sup>

As the critic, Satō Tamotsu (佐藤保) suggests, "Springtime Sleep" is a typical, leisurely hermitic poem.<sup>48</sup> Fei Ming uses the lines from it to

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<sup>46</sup>The translation of the poem is from Wai-lim Yip, *Chinese Poetry -- Major Modes and Genres* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), p. 312.

<sup>47</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 169.

<sup>48</sup>Satō Tamotsu states that traditional Chinese poems, which extol a spring dawn such as "Springtime Sleep", often convey a relaxed hermitic mood, because those who were busy at the central political offices in court could hardly have time for appreciating such a pleasant spring morning in such a leisurely manner. See Satō, *Kanshi no imēji 漢詩のイメージ* (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 1992), pp. 90-92.

foreshadow the tranquil atmosphere surrounding Xizhu at the beginning of a genial day in spring.

He also uses a line from this same poem in Qinzi's words in the chapter, "Red Flower Mountain" ("Huahongshan" 花红山). Looking at the petals on the ground, Qinzi says to Xizhu: "A gust of wind -- Falling flowers: how many?"<sup>49</sup> (『一阵风 -- 花落知多少?』)<sup>50</sup> Here, Fei Ming enhances the poetic atmosphere by reminding the reader of the atmosphere in the classical poem. In the chapter, "Bamboo Flute" ("Xiao" 箫), he also inserts lines from "Grained Apricot Lodge" ("Wenxinguan" 文杏馆) by Wang Wei:

Somehow these lines came to his memory:

I do not know if clouds within the rafters  
Go to make rain among men.<sup>51</sup>

Now clouds, rain, willow trees, mountains ... a scene vaguely unfolded. He had not seen anyone come in. Saying 'nobody' was not right, as he was basically a man for whom the scene is not complete without the human presence.

怎么的想起了这样话来 --

不知栋里云

去作人间雨

于是云，雨，杨柳，山 ... 模模糊糊的开扩一景致。未见有人进来。说没有人那又不是，他根本是没有人不能成景致的一人。<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>The translation is from Wai-lim Yip, *Chinese Poetry -- Major Modes and Genres*, p. 312.

<sup>50</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 257.

<sup>51</sup>The translation is from Pauline Yu, *The Poetry of Wang Wei* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 201.

<sup>52</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, pp. 269-270.

Fei Ming quotes these lines from Wang Wei's poem to recreate the poetic conception (*yijing* 意境), which further describes the world with the associated imagination drawn from the poem.

Similarly, in the "Maple" ("Fengshu" 枫树) chapter, Fei Ming quotes from Du Mu's (杜牧, 803-852) poem, "Qingming" (清明):

... by then, the flowering time was over long ago, and apricot flowers in Bamboo Grove Village were really good to see ... At Qingming period, a visitor to a grave, who walked down through Horse Pasture to this wide road, saw Bamboo Grove Village in the distance and started to recite lines from the *Thousand Poems*, "May I ask where a wineshop is? The shepherd boy points in the distance to Apricot Blossom Village."

... 这时早已过了开花的时候了, 竹林庄的杏花很可以一看 ... 清明时节, 上坟的人, 走放马场下去这一条大路者, 望见竹林庄, 唱起千家诗上的句子『借问酒家何处有, 牧童遥指杏花村』了。<sup>53</sup>

In this passage, Fei Ming seems to be temporarily adjusting the pastoral world of his Bamboo Grove Village to that in Du Mu's famous poem by referring to the time of the flowering of apricots in the past, which is unconnected to the chapter's main storyline. He seems to be trying hard to create an image which overlaps that of Du Mu's, so that he can adopt the tranquil, peaceful atmosphere of the well-received Tang *jueju* poem in his novel.

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 319. *The Thousand Poems* (*Qianjiashi* 千家诗) is the name given to anthologies of *lüshi* (律诗, a poem of eight lines, each containing five or seven characters, with a strict tonal pattern and rhyme scheme) and *jueju* poems of the Tang and Song period, edited by Liu Kezhuang (刘克庄, 1187-1269). There are twenty two volumes. Traditionally, books of annotated poems selected from them were used in schools. See *Cihai* (*shang*) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1979), pp. 270-271.

Apart from the direct influences of the above-mentioned modern English pastoral novels and the traditional Chinese pastoral, there is also a possibility of an indirect influence of the Japanese modern pastoral prose (= sketch-prose) received through Zhou Zuoren. This will be discussed next.<sup>54</sup> After explaining Zhou's influence on Fei Ming in the pastoral aspect in particular, it is necessary to examine what Japanese sketch-prose entailed, and then analyse their potential impact on Fei Ming's pastoral stories.

### The indirect influence of Zhou Zuoren and the Japanese *shaseibun* (写生文 sketch-prose)

As mentioned in Chapter One, Fei Ming had been inclined to a fondness for New poems with a pastoral theme since he was a teenager in the late 1910s.<sup>55</sup> It is likely that this fondness was encouraged further by his close relationship with Zhou Zuoren.

Fei Ming and Zhou Zuoren shared the view that literature is the expression of an individual's genuine feelings and is like a dream.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>For a brief discussion of this topic, see Akemi Kudo (=工藤明美), "Shū Sakujin o baikai to shita, Nihon kindai shaseibunha shōsetsu no Haimei denon shōsetsu eno eikyō ni tsuite" 周作人を媒介とした、日本近代写生文派小説の庵名田園小説への影響について, *Aiura Takashi sensei tsuitō Chūgoku bungaku ron shū* 相浦杲先生追悼中国文学論集, ed. Aiura Takashi sensei tsuitō Chūgoku bungaku ron shū kankō kai 相浦杲先生追悼中国文学論集刊行会 (Tokyo: Tōhō shoten, 1992), pp. 453-467.

<sup>55</sup>See Chapter One, p. 25 of this thesis.

<sup>56</sup>Zhou wrote: "Literature is something which has aesthetic form, which conveys the author's unique feelings and thoughts, and enables the reader to feel pleasure thereby" (文学是用美妙的形式, 将作者独特的思想和感情传达出来, 使看的人能因而得到愉快的一种东西) in *Zhongguo xinwenxue de yuanliu* 中国新文学的源流 (Beiping: Renwen shuju, 1932, rpt. Hunan: Yuelu chubanshe, 1989), p. 4. Zhou also wrote that: "Literature is not a true record, it is a dream. Dreams are not the true replica of waking life, but if removed from waking life their material is gone, no matter whether the dreams are in the nature of a response [to the stimulus of actual events], or wish-fulfilment" (文学不是实录, 乃是一个梦: 梦并不是醒生活的复写, 然而离开了醒生活梦也就没有了材料, 无论所做的是反应的或是满愿的梦) in "Zhulin de gushi, xu" 竹林的故事, 序 [first published in *Yu Si*, No. 48 (12 October

As early as 1925, Fei Ming acknowledged Zhou's strong literary influence in the preface to his first collection of short stories, *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove*: "My own garden has grown from Mr Zhou's."<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, Zhou also wrote in his preface to Fei Ming's first collection:

I don't know why, but what I like reading is always somehow 'hermitic', and there are times when I feel like reading something gentle, just as one might feel like sitting leisurely in the shade of a tree, when basking in the sun can be just as pleasant. When I read Mr Feng's stories, I have that feeling of sitting in the shade of a tree.

我都喜欢读，不过我不知怎地总是有点『隐逸的』，有时候很想找一点温和的读，正如一个人喜欢在树阴下闲坐，虽然晒太阳也是一件快事。我读冯君的小说便是坐在树阴下的时候。<sup>58</sup>

Zhou Zuoren, who confessed that he liked hermitic writings in this way, was himself, in the critic, A Ying's (阿英, a pen-name of Qian Xingcun) words, "a pastoral poet". Although the 'revolutionary' A Ying probably imputed a derogatory connotation to the term<sup>59</sup>, his

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1925)], *Zhulin de gushi* (Beijing: Beixin shuju, 1925), p. 2. Fei Ming expressed the same view in his essay, "Talking of Dreams" in 1927: "In the process of creation there should be 'rumination'; only then can art become a dream. Being a dream there is a zone of haziness between it and the real life where it originated." (创作的时候应该是"反刍"。这样才能够成为一个梦。是梦，所以与当初的实生活隔了模糊的界。) See Fei Ming, "Shuo meng", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 322. The English translations of all these three quotations are taken from Pollard, *A Chinese Look at Literature*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>57</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Xu", *Zhulin de gushi*. See Chapter One, p. 36 of this thesis.

<sup>58</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Zhulin de gushi xu", *Zhulin de gushi*, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup>A Ying was active in promoting 'revolutionary literature' in the late 1920s. See Chapter One, p. 48 of this thesis. He referred to Zhou Zuoren metaphorically as 'tianyuan shiren' (田园诗人, 'a pastoral poet'), and in contrast, to Lu Xun as 'jianku de doushi' (艰苦的斗士, 'an arduous fighter') in "Zhou Zuoren xiaopin xu" 周作人小品序, *Xiandai shiliu jia xiaopin* 现代十六家小品 (Shanghai: Kaiming shuju, 1935). In other essays, such as "Shuo yinyi" 说隐逸 written in 1934 and "Zhou Zuoren shuxin" 《周作人书信》 written in 1935, A Ying expressed his negative opinions about the hermitic character of Zhou Zuoren and the content of Zhou's letter to Fei Ming. See *A Ying wenji* 阿英文集 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1981), pp. 166-167 and pp. 201-202.

claim seems to be justifiable in that Zhou did have a strong attachment to simple, old-fashioned ways, referring to the duality in himself as "rebel" and "hermit" and linking "hermit" and "gentleman" with "idle essays".<sup>60</sup> In the early 1920s, he advocated the expression of local colour and individuality in the Chinese New Literature, and wrote about his aspirations towards a peaceful utopian society.

In March 1923, Zhou wrote in his essay, "Local Diversity and Art" ("Difang yu wenyi" 地方与文艺):

In the past few years, Chinese New Literature and Art seem to have gradually developed, and various kinds of writing have also shown considerable achievements. However, we still feel that something is missing. Why? It is because they are too abstract: as writers stuck to the same (rigid) widespread demands and tried hard to write out the predetermined concept, they have not come to express their own individuality truthfully or strongly. As a result, their writings have naturally become monotonous. Our hope is to break away from such self-imposed shackles and to express freely our individuality which has developed from the local earth.

这几年来中国新兴文艺渐见发达，各种创作也都有相当的成绩，但我们觉得还有一点不足。为什么呢？这便因为太抽象化了，执著普遍的一个要求，努力去写出预定的概念，却没有真实地强烈地表现出自己的个性，其结果当然是一个单调。我们的希望即在于摆脱这些自加的锁丑，自由地发表那从土里滋长出来的个性。<sup>61</sup>

He expressed the same view in his preface to *Old Dreams (Jiumeng 旧梦)*<sup>62</sup>, in April 1923, at the same time that Fei Ming was beginning to write the 'Yan' series stories:

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<sup>60</sup>David E. Pollard, "Chou Tso-jen: A Scholar Who Withdrew", *The Limits of Change -- Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China*, ed. Charlotte Furth (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 337.

<sup>61</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Difang yu wenyi", *Zhou Zuoren sanwenchao 周作人散文钞* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932), p. 9.

<sup>62</sup>*Jiumeng* was a book by the poet, Liu Dabai (刘大白, 1880-1932).

But most of the people of our time have developed a kind of "Kosmopolites" attitude as a reaction against the narrowness of nationalism, and some of the local atmosphere is lost. This is unavoidable, but also a shame ... I despise that kind of traditional, patriotic, false literature but have a great respect for local art. I believe that a strong local flavour is also an important part of the 'cosmopolitan' literature ... Living in these good and bad times, we can write freely, and yet because the weight of tradition is so great, we have been throwing the baby out with the bath water. And so it is that our (New) poems have so far expressed only resistance and not construction, and because of this national resistance we have been losing our local colour ...

不过我们这时代的人，因为对于褊隘的国家主义的反动，大抵养成一种“世界民”（Kosmopolites）的态度，容易减少乡土的气味，这虽然是不得已却也是觉得可惜的。...我轻蔑那些传统的爱国的假文学，然而对于乡土艺术很是爱重：我相信强烈的地方趣味也正是“世界的”文学的一个重大部分。...我们生在这个好而坏的时代，得以自由的创作，却又因为传统的压力太重，以致有非连着小孩一起便不能把盆水倒掉的情形，所以我们向来的诗只在表示反抗而非建立，因反抗国家主义遂并减少乡土色彩 ...<sup>63</sup>

Zhou's longing for a utopian society is expressed in his essay, "The Art of Living" ("Shenghuo zhi yishu" 生活之艺术), published in 1924:

What China really needs now is to build a new Chinese civilization with a kind of new freedom and new control, that is, the renaissance of the old civilization of a thousand years ago, which is the equivalent of the basis of Western culture, Greek civilization.

中国现在所切要的是一种新的自由与新的节制，去建造中国的新文明，也就是复兴千年前的旧文明，也就是与西方文化的基础之希腊文明相合了。<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Jiumeng, xu" 旧梦，序，*Ziji de yuandi* 自己的园地 (first published September 1923, rpt. Hunan: Yuelu shushe, 1987), pp. 117-118. "Kosmopolites" is as it is in the original text.

<sup>64</sup>Kai Ming 开明, "Shenghuo zhi yishu", *Yu Si*, No. 1 (17 November 1924). Also, see "Fei Ming: yi chongdan wei yi de youxian de aichou" 废名：以冲淡为衣的有限的哀愁，*Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo yibai sishijia zhaji, shangce* 中国现代小说140家札记，上册，ed. Zeng Qingrui 曾庆瑞 and Zhao Xiaqiu 赵遐秋 (Guilin: Lijiang chubanshe, 1985), p. 349. According to Ernst Wolff in his *Chou Tso-jen*, pp. 42-43, this idea reflects Zhou's early literary interest in Greek antiquity which led him to admire the spirit of Greek culture. Wolff states that: in essence, the

In these essays, Zhou seems to have voiced his concern at the danger of a tendency at the time towards over-standardization in Chinese literature in an attempt to build up "New" literature. It was with such views in mind that Zhou translated pastoral poems by Theocritus<sup>65</sup> and Remy de Gourmont (1858-1915)<sup>66</sup>, and wrote

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cultural ideal of ancient Greece was a harmonious blending of the sensual and the spiritual elements in man. It aimed to educate man into a human being in whom all natural potentialities might be perfected, so that ultimately life, beauty, and art would become synonymous and man would be all three in one.

Furthermore, Zhou's sympathy since the late 1910s with the New Village (*Atarashiki mura* 新しき村) movement which was led by his Japanese friend, the writer, Mushakōji Saneatsu (武者小路实篤, 1885-1976), was probably another factor stimulating his utopian ideals. Zhou wrote of this time in 1926: "I have dreamed of Utopia once and I aspired after *Atarashiki mura* (New Village) enormously, which is reflected in my literary view." (我以前是梦想过乌托邦的, 对于新村有极大的憧憬, 在文学上也就有些相当的主张。) See Qi Ming 岂明, "Yishu yu shenghuo, xu" 艺术与生活, 序, *Yu Si*, No.93 (22 August 1926). As for *Atarashiki mura* (New Village), it was established in Miyazaki (宫崎) prefecture on 14 November 1918 by Mushakōji Saneatsu and fifteen others who intended to open a utopian, harmonious community, based upon humanism. The village depended upon agriculture and the villagers aimed to lead a communistic cooperative life by working for a fixed number of hours as one's duty and spending the rest of time on exercising one's individuality towards creative directions. Initially it attracted the support of many young people, but gradually lost credibility. See *Bungei yōgo no kiso chishiki '88* 文艺用语の基礎知識 '88, ed. Hasegawa Izumi 長谷川泉 and Takahashi Shintarō 高橋新太郎 (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1988), p. 32. See also Zhou Zuoren's essays on *Atarashiki mura*, such as "Ribei de Xincun" 日本的新村, "Xincun de lixiang yu shiji" 新村的理想与实际 and "Fang Ribei de Xincun ji" 访日本的新村记 collected in *Yishu yu shenghuo* 艺术与生活 (first published February 1931, rpt. Hunan: Yuelu chubanshe, 1989), pp. 206-241. On 28 January 1925, Zhou sent money to support *Atarashiki mura*. According to Mushakōji Saneatsu, Zhou Zuoren became a member of *Atarashiki mura* and often gave them financial help. In addition, Zhou agreed to set up a Peking branch of *Atarashiki mura*. See *Zhou Zuoren nianpu*, p. 186.

<sup>65</sup>Zhou published his translation of *Idylls* 10 (The Reapers) in 1918 and *Idylls* 27 (Familiar Intercourse) in 1925. See Zhou Zuoren, "Gushi jinyi" 古诗今译, *Xinqingnian*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (15 February 1918) and Kai Ming, "Xila muge zhi yi" 希腊牧歌之一, *Yu Si*, No. 24 (27 April 1925). He also quoted *Idylls* 1 (The Passion of Daphnis) in 1926. See Qi Ming, "Chahua yu, 15, mushen zhi kongbu" 茶话庾, 十五 牧神之恐怖, *Yu Si*, No. 79 (17 May 1926). In July 1926, he published the translation of Theocritus; "Xila muge chao" 希腊牧歌抄, in *Luotuo* 骆驼, No. 1 (26 July 1926). [The English titles of *Idylls* are taken from *Theocritus: Idylls and Epigrams*, trans. Daryl Hine (New York: Atheneum, 1982).]

<sup>66</sup>Zhou translated six poems from *Simone, Poème Champêtre* (Simone, Rustic Poems) by Remy de Gourmont: *Les Cheveux* (Her Hair), *Le Houx* (The Holly), *Le Brouillard* (Amy Lowell translated this into English as 'The Fog': Zhou Zuoren into Chinese as 雪 'Snow'), *Les Feuilles Mortes* (The Dead Leaves), *La Rivière*

essays which, from his vantage point as a resident in Peking, reminisce about things particular to his hometown, such as "Wild Herbs of My Hometown" ("Guxiang de yecai" 故乡的野菜)<sup>67</sup>, "Chirp" ("Niaosheng" 鸟声)<sup>68</sup> and "Boats With Black Awnings" ("Wupengchuan" 乌篷船).<sup>69</sup> It would seem that Zhou wrote them in criticism of the 'modern' life of Peking. In his essay, "Teacakes of Peking" ("Beijing de chashi" 北京的茶食) written in February 1924, he stated that: "The pity about life in China today is that it is so very dry and coarse. Not to mention anything else, I have been wandering about in Peking for ten years and have never yet eaten a good snack." (可怜现在的中国生活，却是极端的干燥粗鄙，别的不说，我在北京彷徨了十年，终未曾吃到好点心。) <sup>70</sup> This comment echoes the narrator's words about the home-made country dish in Fei Ming's "The Half Year", written in September 1923: "Hah! Even many eighteen-yuan-a-month salaries couldn't buy this taste! I can assure

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(The River) and *Le Verger* (The Orchard). See Amy Lowell, "Remy de Gourmont" and "Appendix A" in *Six French Poets -- Studies In Contemporary Literature* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915), pp. 135-144 and pp. 375-382. Zhou wrote that he had consulted the English translation by Amy Lowell (1874-1925) in *Six French Poets* and the Japanese translation by Horiguchi Daigaku (堀口大学, 1892-) in *Kinō no hana* (昨日の花, *Yesterday's Flowers*). See Kai Ming, "Tianyuanshi" 田园诗, *Yu Si*, No. 5 (15 December 1924).

<sup>67</sup>Tao Ran 陶然, "Guxiang de yecai", [first published in *Chenbao fukan* (5 April 1924)], *Zhou Zuoren daibiaozuo* 周作人代表作, ed. Zhang Juxiang (Zhengzhou: Huanghe wenyi chubanshe, 1987), pp. 109-111.

<sup>68</sup>Kai Ming, "Niaosheng", *Yu Si*, No. 21 (6 April 1925). The essay evoked much sympathy among its readers and between April 1925 and May 1926, sixteen articles about folklore of various regions were contributed to *Yu Si*. See *Yu Si*, Nos. 24, 27, 28, 35, 37, 40, 42, 43, 44, 50, 52, 53, 55, 61 (two essays) and 79.

<sup>69</sup>Qi Ming, "Wupengchuan" [first published in *Yu Si*, No. 107 (27 November 1926)], *Zhou Zuoren sanwenchao* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932), pp. 47-50.

<sup>70</sup>Tao Ran, "Beijing de chashi" [first published in *Chenbao fujian* (18 March 1924)], *Zhou Zuoren sanwenchao*, pp. 14-16.

you I'm not grumbling: in the last ten years, every time there's been stormy weather, oh, how I have missed it!"<sup>71</sup>

Fei Ming mentioned "Goldfish" by Suzuki Miekichi as his favourite story during the early part of his literary career.<sup>72</sup> Suzuki was also one of Zhou's favourite Japanese writers.<sup>73</sup> This link between Fei Ming and Zhou Zuoren through Suzuki Miekichi seems plain, but on close examination, it leads to an explanation of why Fei Ming's stories were in the style of what Lu Xun called, "lingering deliberately, looking back on his shadow and lamenting his lot" ("youyi dihui, guying zilian" 有意低徊，顾影自怜).<sup>74</sup> Although Lu Xun's phrase seems to carry a somewhat negative nuance, it is true that Fei Ming's pastoral stories leave behind a 'lingering' aftertaste. In "Goldfish", Suzuki's interest lies in describing the first-person narrator's unquenchable 'lingering' feeling for the past, which is a mixture of his nostalgic longing for his late wife and a sense of remorse for his own behaviour. He is less interested in constructing a dramatic eventful story.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>See Chapter Three, p. 111 of this thesis.

<sup>72</sup>Fei Ming, "Shuo Meng", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 319. See Chapter Three, pp. 122-123 of this thesis.

<sup>73</sup>Zhou Zuoren read Suzuki's works very closely. This is evident from the fact that Zhou used the expression, "the rain falling like spider's threads" (只是蜘蛛丝似的一缕缕的洒下来) after Suzuki's style, in his preface to *Yutian de shu* 雨天的书 in 1923. When the preface to *Yutian de shu* (雨天的书, 序) was collected in *Zhou Zuoren sanwen chao*, the expression was annotated at p. 126: "Spider's threads; Suzuki Miekichi often likes to use it to describe drizzle in his stories." (蜘蛛丝; 铃木三重吉小说中常喜以此形容细雨。) In "Goldfish" which was collected in *Xiandai Riben xiaoshuoji* 现代日本小说集, there is also the expression; "Today, it is drizzling like spider's threads again, outside." (今天外边又淅沥的下着蛛丝一般的下雨。)

<sup>74</sup>Lu Xun's words in his introduction to *Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi, xiaoshuo erji* 中国新文学大系, 小说二集 published in 1935.

<sup>75</sup>See Chapter Three, pp. 123-124 of this thesis.

Suzuki Miekichi was a story-writer of the *shaseibun*-school.<sup>76</sup> The *Shaseibun*, which was an innovation of the late 1890s, a development of *haiku* (俳句) and *haibun* (俳文)<sup>77</sup>, was initially sometimes called *shōhinbun* (小品文) or *shin haibun* (新俳文 new *haibun*).<sup>78</sup> David Pollard points out that when Zhou Zuoren suggested his idea of the Chinese New Essay, he was hinting at *haibun* and thinking of what he called the 'new *paiwen*' (新俳文).<sup>79</sup> *Haibun* is a prose genre pioneered by Matsuo Bashō (松尾芭蕉, 1644-1699) and written in a poetic style reminiscent of the *haiku*, the seventeen-syllabled suggestive verse which deals with familiar objects or events in everyday life with an emphasis on the sense of a season, and which embodies thoughts on nature and human life.<sup>80</sup> Zhou sought to create in Chinese essays the same kind of lingering effect on the mind of the reader that is to be found in *haiku*.<sup>81</sup> He was also

<sup>76</sup>Suzuki Miekichi wrote that he had been very interested in *shaseibun* published in *Hototogisu* (ホトトギス; *Cuckoo*) since 1901, and had particularly liked Sakamoto Shihoda's (坂本四方太, 1873-1917) writings. See Fukuda Kiyoto 福田清人, *Shaseibunha no kenkyū* 写生文派の研究 (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1972), p. 149 and p. 248. Suzuki also claimed that the basis of his writings was *shaseibun*. See Suzuki Miekichi's essay, *Atarashii bunshō ni okeru Kyōshi shi no kōseki* 新しき文章における虚子氏の功績, quoted in Fukuda, p. 249.

<sup>77</sup>*Haibun* generally refers to the writings by *haiku* poets and especially those written with humour (俳諧味). Although the writings by the *haiku* poets after the *Meiji* period (1868-) are not called *haibun* but *shaseibun*, they can be considered as a variation of *haibun*. See *Bungei yōgo no kiso chishiki* '88, p. 583.

<sup>78</sup>The *shaseibun* appeared after the influential modern *haiku* poet, Masaoka Shiki (正岡子規, 1867-1902) introduced into the traditional *haiku* and *haibun* the sketching method of the Western painting, notably realistic depiction and the selection of the 'point' of the composition. See Sōma Tsuneo 相馬庸郎, *Shiki, Kyōshi, Hekigoō -- Shaseibunha bungaku ron* 子規, 虚子, 碧梧桐 -- 写生派文学論 (Tokyo: Yōyōsha, 1986), pp. 38-39.

<sup>79</sup>Pollard, *A Chinese Look at Literature*, pp.110-112.

<sup>80</sup>Fei Ming also seems to have been familiar with *haiku*. He quoted a *haiku* by Matsuo Bashō in *Tan Xinshi*. See Fei Ming, *Tan xinshi* (Beiping: Xinmin yinshuguan, 1944, rpt. Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1984), p. 31.

<sup>81</sup>Ernst Wolff, *Chou Tso-jen*, p. 69.

very fond of the *shaseibun*; he wrote essays in both Chinese and Japanese after the style of *shaseibun*<sup>82</sup> and enjoyed reading Japanese modern stories developed from *shaseibun* (= the *shaseibun*-school stories).<sup>83</sup> It is probable that Zhou thought of these stories as one direction for Chinese New Stories, as he had considered the *haibun* and *shaseibun* models for Chinese New Essays.<sup>84</sup>

Some of the *shaseibun*-school stories match Michael Squires' idea of 'modern pastoral'. The *shaseibun*-school stories, which began appearing in the late 1900s<sup>85</sup>, are often set in the countryside and deal with the everyday life of ordinary people. Many of them are based upon the author's own experience, which adds the 'realistic' quality to their rural world.<sup>86</sup> The writers of the *shaseibun*-school

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<sup>82</sup>See for example, his essay about fishing written in Chinese after the *shaseibun* style, "Paixie" 俳諧, *Zhi Tang huixianglu* 知堂回想录 (Hong Kong: Tingtao chubanshe, 1970), pp. 241-243. See also, Zhou, "Rumengji" 如梦记, *Zhi Tang shuhua, xia* 知堂书话, 下, ed. Zhong Shuhe 钟叔河 (Hunan: Yuelu shushe, 1986), pp. 621-622. He also wrote an essay, "Sifa" 死法, after reading Masaoka Shiki's essay, "Shigo" 死後. See Zhou, "Sifa", *Zhou Zuoren sanwenchao*, p. 55.

<sup>83</sup>Zhou mentioned in his essay, "Paixie" that he liked such *shaseibun*-school stories as *Tsuchi* (土, *Earth*) and "Taijū to sono inu" (太十と其犬, "Taijū and his dog") by Nagatsuka Takashi (長塚節, 1879-1915), "Haikaishi" (俳諧師, "The Haiku Poet") by Takahama Kyoshi (高浜虚子, 1874-1959) and "Yume no gotoshi" (夢の如し, "Like a Dream") by Sakamoto Shihōda. See *Zhi Tang huixianglu*, p. 241.

<sup>84</sup>Zhou was a regular reader of the *shaseibun* magazine *Hototogisu* while in Japan from 1906 to 1911, as can be seen from his essay, "Paixie": "At that time, the magazine not only brought forward *haiku* but also contained a prose section, including stories and essays. They applied the method Shiki advocated of 'sketching' to prose-writing, and achieved something quite special." (当时所出杂志并不单是提倡俳句, 里边有散文部份, 包括小说随笔。子规所提倡的『写生』亦应用于散文方面, 有一种特别的成就。) See Zhou Zuoren, "Paixie", *Zhi Tang huixianglu*, p. 241.

<sup>85</sup>Fukuda Kiyoto, *Shaseibunha no kenkyū*, p. 34

<sup>86</sup>For example, Sakamoto Shihōda wrote in his preface to "Like a Dream" that the story was neither an accurate autobiography nor a complete fiction and that he had tried to combine the facts in his fragmentary memories with some imagination to express the feelings he had had in his boyhood. See Sakamoto Shihōda's preface to "Like a Dream", quoted in Fukuda Kiyoto, *Shaseibunha no kenkyū*, p. 139 and pp. 150-151. Furthermore, the settings and the characters in most of Nagatsuka Takashi's stories (including the two stories Zhou mentioned as his favourites) are modelled upon his hometown in the countryside in Ibaragi (茨城) and the people he knew there. Takahama Kyoshi

stories were mostly from the countryside and came to Tokyo and developed a literary career there, continuing the *shaseibun's* spirit of local diversity.<sup>87</sup> Suzuki Miekichi was one of them. His story, "Goldfish" conveys a hermitic atmosphere as the narrator describes a period of convalescence when he shut himself off from the outside world to write his first novel at home. In other stories such as "Plovers" ("Chidori" 千鳥), life in the countryside is described from the city-country perspective with nostalgia and admiration.<sup>88</sup>

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tried to 'make a harmony between fictionality and actuality' in his stories. See Fukuda Kiyoto, *Shaseibunha no kenkyū*, p. 241 and p. 111. Another example is "The Tomb of Wild Chrysanthemums" ("Nogiku no haka" 野菊の墓) by Itō Sachio (伊藤左千夫, 1864-1913). This was first published in *Hototogisu*, Vol. 9, No. 4 in January 1906, and in book form in April 1906. It is narrated nostalgically by the first-person narrator called Masao 政夫 who is now married, and concerns his platonic, teenage, tragic love for his cousin, Tamiko 民子. It is set in his hometown in the countryside ten years earlier. After Masao leaves to study in the town, Tamiko is forced by her family to marry someone else. In the end, she dies giving birth. The title derives from her favourite flower, whose image she represents, and which Masao plants as a tribute around her tomb. The setting of the story is a village in Itō's home prefecture, Chiba 千葉. See Itō Sachio, "Nogiku no haka", *Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshū, roku, Masaoka Shiki, Itō Sachio, Nagatsuka Takashi shū* 現代日本文学全集6 正岡子規, 伊藤左千夫, 長塚節集 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1956), pp. 177-196.

<sup>87</sup>*Shaseibun* often described natural scenery and life in the countryside, which reflected Masaoka Shiki's support of literature about the countryside written by writers from the countryside. Masaoka wrote in 1900, in the literary magazine, *Hototogisu* which he had started publishing in 1897, that he wished to "clean out the rotten (hackneyed) atmosphere of the city in contemporary literature and let the fresh air blow in". See Masaoka Shiki, "Hototogisu dai yon kan dai yichi gō no hajimeni" 「ホトトギス」第四卷第一号のはじめに, *Hototogisu*, Vol 4, No. 1 (October 1900), quoted in Sōma Tsuneo, *Shiki, Kyoshi, Hekigotō -- Shaseibunha bungaku ron*, p. 20. Masaoka Shiki and his first *shaseibun* successor, Takahama Kyoshi were themselves from a provincial town in south-east Japan, Matsuyama 松山.

<sup>88</sup>"Chidori" was first published in *Hototogisu* in May 1906. The first-person narrator recounts his transitory platonic love for a young, gentle, sad-looking woman called Ofuji-san (お藤さん) whom he met only once in the rural island where he went to recuperate away from the town. The reminiscent story ends with the narrator's description of his longing for Ofuji-san when he discovers that she has gone quietly, leaving behind a sleeve of a *kimono*-undergarment patterned with plovers. See Suzuki Miekichi, "Chidori", *Meiji, Taishō bungaku zenshū, dai nijūhachi kan, Suzuki Miekichi hen* (Tokyo: Shunyōdō, 1927), pp. 1-21. The setting of the story is known to be the island (Nomishima 能美島)

Considering that in 1918 the non-story-writer<sup>89</sup> Zhou Zuoren appealed to Chinese writers to follow the Japanese example in developing a prose literature modern in form and content<sup>90</sup>, the distant, indirect influence of the *shaseibun* and the *shaseibun*-school stories on Fei Ming's pastoral stories, which also express a 'lingering' feeling for the passage of time, has to be suspected. Examples of the similarity of writings by Fei Ming, Zhou Zuoren and *shaseibun* writers can be drawn from Fei Ming's "The Water-chestnut Marsh", Zhou Zuoren's "The Death of a Villager" ("Yige xiangmin de si" 一个乡民的死)<sup>91</sup> and Sakamoto Shihōda's (坂本四方太, 1873-1917) "Like a Dream"

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where Suzuki stayed for a year to recover his health. See Fukuda Kiyoto, *Shaseibunha no kenkyū*, pp. 247-252.

<sup>89</sup>According to Murata Toshihiro 村田俊裕, Zhou Zuoren wrote nine pieces of fiction, all of which turned out to be either abortive or unsuccessful. Zhou knew he lacked the essential constructive and imaginative power for fiction writing, and thus chose essays as his main form of literary expression. He felt some frustration at his elder brother, Lu Xun's prominent success as a story-writer. See Murata Toshihiro, "Shū Sakujin no nokoshita shōsetsu sōsaku no kiseki to sono yigi" 周作人の残した小説創作の軌跡とその意義, *Nihon Chūgokugaku kaihō* 日本中国学会報, No. 29, 1977, pp. 174-187. D. E. Pollard concludes that the fundamental reason why Zhou was attracted to the essay above all other forms of literature was its special relationship to humanism. See Pollard, *A Chinese Look at Literature*, p. 138.

<sup>90</sup>In his article, "Ribei jin sanshinian xiaoshuo zhi fada" 日本近三十年小说之发达, published in 1918. This had originally been the subject of a lecture at Peking University, but later appeared as an article in *Xinqingnian*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (15 July 1918). It was the first comprehensive survey in Chinese of the development of the modern Japanese short story. In it, Zhou also defended cultural borrowing (see Ernst Wolff, *Chou Tso-jen*, pp. 68-69) and also briefly introduced the main characteristics of the stories developed from *shaseibun*.

<sup>91</sup>One of the "Essays from the Western Hills" ("Xishan xiaopin" 西山小品). In 1921, Zhou Zuoren wrote two essays in Japanese for the magazine, *Seichōsuru hoshi no gun* (生長する星の群, *A Group of Growing Stars*) which was edited by his friend, Mushakōji Saneatsu. *Seichōsuru hoshi no gun*, Vol. 1, No. 9 (December 1921). They shared the title, "Seizan shōhin" (西山小品, "Essays from the Western Hills") and were later translated into Chinese by Zhou himself and published in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* in 1922. See Zhou Zuoren, "Seizan shōhin", *Shū Sakujin zuihitsu shō* 周作人随笔抄 (Tokyo: Bunkūdō, 1939), pp. 56-79 and "Xishan xiaopin", *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (10 February 1922), pp. 1-4. The two essays describe life at a temple resort in Xishan near Peking, where Zhou retreated to recuperate from an illness. Descriptions of the peaceful scenery of Xishan, and the restful leisure of convalescence impart a mood of

("Yume no gotoshi" 夢の如し). Sakamoto is a *shaseibun* writer whose works Zhou Zuoren had enjoyed reading and translated into Chinese.<sup>92</sup>

Fei Ming's depiction of the view of Taojia Village in his "The Water-chestnuts Marsh" reads:

The tiled houses were in a straight row, over ten in all, and were mud-walled, with a pattern of bricks traced with white lime on them. Under the rays of the sun, the houses had a lustre that spoke of the prosperity of Taojia Village. The bamboo groves behind the village stretched down towards the river, the leaves sticking out in layers. The river curved round the edge of the bamboo groves and babbled on its way. Here the groves were really near the town, with just the river in between; part of the town wall overlooked the groves. There was a little path through the bamboo groves visible from the town wall, and suddenly a man would appear by the river -- a Taojia villager fetching water.<sup>93</sup>

一条线排着，十来重瓦屋，泥墙，石灰画得砖块分明，太阳底下更有一种光泽，表示陶家村总是兴旺的。屋后竹林，绿叶堆成了台阶的样子，倾斜至河岸，河水沿竹子打一个湾，潺潺流过。这里离城才是真近，中间就只有河，城墙的一段正对了竹子临水而立。竹林里一条小路，城上也窥得见，不当心河边忽然站了一个人——陶家村人出来挑水。<sup>94</sup>

Zhou Zuoren's essay begins :

At the back of the buildings where I lived, in the middle of the vast courtyard, was a hall for the arhats. A little lower to the

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tranquillity and remoteness, a mood frequently encountered in many of his essays. See Wolff, *Chou Tso-jen*, p. 29.

<sup>92</sup>"Like a Dream" was first published serially in *Hototogisu* from February 1907 to April 1909. It was published as a book in September 1909. It is narrated in the first-person about the narrator's childhood in a fishing village when he was about three to seven years old. The story consists of fragmentary episodes in his everyday life as a child. See Sakamoto Shihōda, "Yume no gotoshi", *Hototogisu*, Vol. 10, Nos. 5 and 8, Vol. 11, Nos. 1, 10 - 11, Vol. 12, Nos. 4 and 7.

<sup>93</sup>Christopher Smith's English translation published in *Chinese Literature*, Spring 1990, p. 113, with amendments.

<sup>94</sup>Fei Ming, "Lingdang", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 154.

left of it was the temple kitchen. As there were several other kitchens, this one was specially called the Big Kitchen. Past the Big Kitchen and through the wooden gate, one could walk up to the mountain. The shallow water in the stream flowed down past the temple to beyond the wooden gate. A wooden bridge had been built over the stream, and the two or three big trees at the side of the bridge made a canopy above, so that it was very cool there even at midday. Grooms and villagers would often sit on the stones beneath the trees while they rested and chatted.

我住着的房屋后面，广阔的院子中间，有一座罗汉堂。他的左边略低的地方是寺里的厨房。因为此外还有好几个别的厨房，所以特别称他作大厨房。从这里穿过，出了板门，便可以走出山上。浅的溪坑底里的一点泉水，沿着寺流下来，经过板门的前面。溪上架着一座板桥。桥边有两三棵大树，成了凉棚，便是正午也很凉快，马夫和乡民们常常坐在这树下的石头上，谈天休息着。<sup>95</sup>

Sakamoto Shihōda's description of a scene in the very early part of "Like a Dream"<sup>96</sup> goes:

At the back of our house was a small bamboo grove, and in front of the wooden veranda were paddy fields. Beyond the sandy hills was the sea, and we could hear the surging waves all the time. On the roads, in the fields, there was sand everywhere ... and the supports of our *geta* (wooden shoes) never wore down. When the houses here were being built, they had scattered the sand with only ten or twelve buckets of water, so that the sand would be solid and firm; now it was harder than rock.

我们家的后边是小竹林，板廊的前面即是田地。隔着砂山，后方是海，澎湃的波浪的声音不断的听到。无论道路，无论田地，全都是沙 ... 木屐的齿也不会得磨灭。建造房屋的时候，只在沙上泼去五六担的水，沙便坚固的凝结，变得比岩石还要硬。<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Xishan xiaopin", *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (10 February 1922), p. 1.

<sup>96</sup>Zhou translated "Like a Dream" into Chinese from 2 September 1943 to July 1944 and published the translation serially in *Yiwen zazhi* 艺文杂志 from Vol. 1, No. 6 (December 1943) to Vol. 2, No. 9 (September 1944). See *Zhou Zuoren nianpu*, p. 492 and p. 503.

<sup>97</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Paixie", *Zhi Tang huixianglu*, pp. 242-243. In "Paixie", Zhou also compared his own style in his essay about fishing, with Sakamoto's style in "Like a Dream" to show his efforts to imitate the *shaseibun* style.

The most noticeable similarity of these three depictions of rural landscape lies in their descriptive technique and light airy atmosphere.<sup>98</sup> Another similarity lies in their way of looking at nature. In general, in such *shaseibun* as Sakamoto's<sup>99</sup>, nature is described as something that embraces man, and not as the confronting object to be seen analytically.<sup>100</sup> Such a way of viewing

<sup>98</sup>Zhao Jinghua 赵京华 also points out the similarity of the light unworldly atmosphere in Zhou Zuoren's "Xishan xiaopin" and Japanese *haiku* literature. He wrote: "From 'The Essays from the Western Hills' and 'The Miscellaneous Letters from the Mountain', you can feel the lightness of the savour of Zen in the Japanese *haiku* poetry kneaded into them." (你从《西山小品》,《山中杂信》中便可以感到揉合了日本俳谐“禅味”的冲淡味。) See Zhao Jinghua, *Xunzhao jingshen jiyuan -- Zhou Zuoren wenhua sixiang yu shenmei zhuiqiu* 寻找精神家园——周作人文化思想与审美追求 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1989), p. 105. The critic, Ryū Gan-i (=Liu Anwei 刘岸伟) also points out the strong influence of *shaseibun* on Zhou Zuoren's essays. See Ryū Gan-i, *Tōyōjin no hiai* (Tokyo: Kawaide shobō shinsha, 1991), p. 179. Ma Liangchun 马良春 describes Fei Ming's works as "limpid and calm" ("chongdan" 冲淡) in "Yiwei juyou tedu fengge de zuojia (daixu)" 一位具有独特风格的作家(代序), *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 4, but this word seems to be applicable to all three passages here. Stephen Owen describes some of the characteristics of "chongdan" as "suggesting a gentleness without ambition or aggression", and having "the appearance of the separate human subject, attempting to apprehend things external to himself and to enter into a harmonious relation with his surroundings". See Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 308. "Chongdan", which is one of the "twenty-four categories of poetry" discussed by Sikong Tu (司空图, 837-908), also seems to have a link to the above idea of "lingering taste". Zhan Youxin 詹幼馨 writes that a "limpid and calm" work "only triggers you, inspires you, as so-called 'being imperceptibly influenced by what you see and hear', all depend upon your own savouring and pondering of it" (只是诱发你, 启示你, 所谓『耳濡目染』, 全靠你自己去品尝, 去思索). See Zhan, *Sikong Tu <<Shipin>> yanyi* 司空图《诗品》衍绎 (Hong Kong: Huafeng shuju, 1983), p. 13.

<sup>99</sup>This may not be very clearly shown in the quoted passage by Sakamoto, but in other parts of "Like a Dream", the harmony of nature and man is depicted more clearly.

<sup>100</sup>*Takahama Kyoshi kenkyū* 高次虚子研究, ed. Yamaguchi Seishi 山口誓子, Imai Humio 今井文男 and Matsui Toshihiko 松井利彦 (Tokyo: Yūbun shoin, 1974), pp. 280-281. *Shaseibun* succeeded the view towards nature expressed in *haiku*, which is also the Japanese traditional attitude towards nature. Suzuki Daisetz 铃木大拙 describes it as follows: "Zen wants us to meet Nature as a friendly, well-meaning agent whose inner being is thoroughly like our own, always ready to work in accord with our legitimate aspirations. Nature is never our enemy standing always against us in a threatening attitude; it is not a power which will crush us if we do not crush it or blind it into our service." See Daisetz T. Suzuki, "XI. Love of Nature", *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Princeton: Princeton

nature is common in the writings of Fei Ming<sup>101</sup> and the traditional Chinese pastoral.<sup>102</sup>

University Press, 1970; third printing, 1973), p. 351. Also, see Nishida Masayoshi 西田正好 "Nihon teki shizenkan no honshitsu -- Nihon no hūdo to koten" 日本的自然观の本质 -- 日本の風土と古典, *Nihon bungaku no shizenkan* 日本文学の自然観 (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1972), pp. 282-313, and Miyata Boshi 宮田丙子, "San, shizenkan" 三, 自然観, *Masaoka Shiki no shin kenkyū* 正岡子规の新研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunkaku, 1935), pp. 102-113. Zhao Jinghua pointed out that Zhou Zuoren's interest in *haiku*, and the essays and stories developed from *haiku*, partially came from his sympathy with the Japanese attitude towards nature, strongly influenced by Zen, which was imported to Japan from China in the latter part of the Song dynasty, that is, the earlier part of the thirteenth century. See Zhao Jinghua, *Xunzhao jingshen jiayuan*, pp. 172-174. Yan Shaotang 严绍堃 and Wang Xiaoping 王晓平 also pointed out the Chinese influences of Zhuangzi, Chan Buddhism and Tang and Song poets such as Du Mu, Su Shi (苏轼, 1037-1101) and Huang Tingjian (黄庭坚, 1045-1105) on Matsuo Bashō's *haiku*. See Yang Shaotang and Wang Xiaoping, "Di wu zhang, di san jie, Zhongguo wenxue zai Songwei Bajiao paixie chuanguo zhong de yiyi" 第五章 第三节, 中国文学在松尾芭蕉俳谐创作中的意义, *Zhongguo wenxue zai Riben* 中国文学在日本 (Guangzhou: Huacheng chubanshe, 1990), pp. 267-281.

<sup>101</sup>Zhu Guanqian also points out: "... and yet what Fei Ming gives us is many sketches of still life ... He applied colours to the natural scenery, and at the same time set off the characters' state of mind by contrast. In depicting the characters' reaction to the scenery, he only used a slight touch of colour and didn't go into too extensive an analysis." (... 废名所给我们的却是许多幅的静物写生。... 他渲染了自然风景, 同时也就烘托出人物的心境, 到写人物对于风景的反应时, 他只略一点染, 用不着过于铺张的分析。) See Meng Shi 孟实, "Qiao" 桥, *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1 July 1937).

<sup>102</sup>Yu Dafu (郁达夫, 1896-1945) pointed out that the Japanese *shaseibun* and Chinese traditional pastoral prose, such as "Returning Home" ("Guiqulai xi ci" 归去来兮辞) by Tao Yuanming and *Six Records of a Floating Life* (*Fusheng liuji* 浮生六记) by Shen Fu (沈复, 1763-?), are indeed quite similar in their descriptions of the 'wild landscape' (田园野景), of 'leisurely life in nature' (闲适的自然生活) and of 'pure emotions' (纯粹的情感). See Yu Dafu, "Qingxin de xiaopin wenzi" 清新的小品文字, [first published in *Xiandai xuesheng* 现代学生, Vol. 3, No. 1 (October 1933)], collected in *Yu Dafu yanjiu ziliao, shangce* 郁达夫研究资料, 上册 ed. Wang Zili 王自立 and Chen Zishan 陈子善 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1982), pp. 274-277. [The English title for *Fusheng liuji* here is taken from *Six Records of a Floating Life*, trans. Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui (Harmondsworth: Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1983).] The *shaseibun* writer Sakamoto Shihōda also suggested that "The Small Tarn West of the Knoll" ("Zhi Xiaoqiu xi Xiaoshitan ji" 至小丘西小石潭记) in Liu Zongyuan's (柳宗元, 773-819) "Eight Records of Yongzhou" ("Yongzhou baji" 永州八记) could be an ideal model for *shaseibun*. Sakamoto referred to the following passage for explanation: "There were about a hundred fish in the tarn, and they seemed to be gliding through empty space without support. In the sunlight which reached the bottom, casting shadows over the rocks, the fish would stay for a while motionless then suddenly dart far away. They scudded to and fro, as if sharing the visitors' delight." (潭中鱼可百许头, 皆若空游无所依。日光下澈, 影布石上, 怡然不动; 俛尔远逝, 往来翕忽, 似与游者相乐。) [The English translation is by Yang Xianyi and Gladys

Lu Xun used the word, 'lingering' ('dihui' 低徊) for Fei Ming, but *shaseibun* are also characterized by the same word. According to the most famous writer of the *shaseibun*-school, Natsume Sōseki (夏目漱石, 1867-1916), the *shaseibun* evokes a particular atmosphere, which he calls 'lingering taste' ('teikai shumi' 低徊趣味).<sup>103</sup> This idea of 'lingering taste' seems to be related to the light, airy atmosphere which is shared by Fei Ming and the *shaseibun*. The question thus arises: how is it created?

The main contribution is provided by the writers' detached, impressionistic approach to the written objects, which are usually not socially important or urgent matters such as politics, but are very often everyday, familiar, rather modest things. In other words, instead of clarifying anatomically every single detail of the events, or the characters' appearances and emotions in their works, these writers leave a great deal of room for the reader's own imagination. For instance, as Natsume suggests, the *shaseibun*-school story is written with humour, which comes from the writer's easy, relaxed,

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Yang in *Poetry and Prose of the Tang and Song* (Beijing: Panda Books, 1984), p. 172.] Sakamoto stated that the part, "then suddenly dart far away" (倏尔远逝) corresponded to the 'point' of the composition of the passage, which is necessary for a good essay. See Shihōda 四方太, "Shaseibun ni tsuite" 写生文に就いて, *Hototogisu*, Vol. 9, No. 9. Overall, it would seem that the essential factor linking the Japanese *shaseibun* and these pieces of traditional Chinese prose is the aesthetic view of the hermitic attitude towards life based upon the Daoist/Chan (Zen) Buddhist approach to nature. In the *shaseibun*-school story, for example, in Itō Sachio's "The Tomb of the Wild Chrysanthemums", there is the scene which reflects the Zen attitude towards nature: Tamiko worships the setting sun with her hands pressed together.

<sup>103</sup>In 1908 Natsume claimed that he invented the word 'teikai shumi' himself. Natsume Sōseki, "Keitō, jo" 鶯頭, 序, *Sōseki Zenshū* 漱石全集, Vol. 14 (Tokyo: Sōseki zenshu kankōkai, 1929), pp. 435-443. Natsume's first novel, *I am a Cat* (*Wagahai wa neko dearu*, 我が輩は猫である), was written with the encouragement of Takahama Kyoshi, who was Masaoka Shiki's disciple and the editor of *Hototogisu*. It was published serially in the magazine in 1905-6.

placid, detached attitude as an onlooker. It concentrates on describing the whole scene or the atmosphere of certain things, rather than tracing intently the causality of the events or the fate of the characters in it.<sup>104</sup> As discussed in Chapter Three, Fei Ming, too, does not attempt to pursue a chain of causality or to describe characters in detail. Neither do his narrators in his pastoral stories expose intense, raw, immediate emotions in an explicit manner.

It would seem that Zhou Zuoren saw in *shaseibun* the embodiment of his idea of a literature with local colour and individuality which reflected life not from a political viewpoint, but from a purely aesthetic or philosophical viewpoint<sup>105</sup>, and from this

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<sup>104</sup>Natsume Sōseki, "Keitō, jo". In this essay, Natsume also suggested that the relaxed attitude which creates the 'lingering taste' savours of the unworldliness and transcendence of *haiku* and the style of a Zen monk. Lu Xun had translated and published "Kakemono" (掛物, "A Scroll") and "Kureigu sensei" (クレイク 先生, "Mr Craig") by Natsume Sōseki in *A Collection of Modern Japanese Stories* in 1923 and introduced Natsume's idea of the 'lingering taste' in its appendix. However, as the critic Takeda Taijun 武田泰淳 suggested, Lu Xun in his later years tried to ignore the possible beauty of Japanese literary works. See Ryū Gan-i, *Tōyōjin no hiai*, p. 50.

<sup>105</sup>In his essay, "Shenghuo zhi yishu" in which he expressed his utopian ideal, Zhou Zuoren also wrote that the Japanese way of living still preserved the artistic quality of the *Heian* period (8th-11th century). He wrote: "Although Japan has been very much influenced by Song Neo-Confucian teaching, it might as well be said that in their way of living, they still retain some ways from the *Heian* period, and many ways from customs prevalent in the Tang period. This makes it so much easier to understand the art of living there. The Japanese way of living has certainly preserved this artistic colour in many of her manners and customs." (日本虽然也很受到宋学的影响, 生活上却可以说是承受平安朝的系统, 还有许多唐代的流风余韵, 因此了解生活之艺术也更是容易。在许多风俗上日本的确保存这艺术的色彩。) In another essay, "Geyong ertong de wenxue" 歌咏儿童的文学 published in *Chenbao fujian* (11 February 1923), he introduced and discussed the Japanese *Heian* period essay (*zuihitsu*, 随笔), *Makura no sōshi* (枕草子, *The Pillow Book*) by Sei Shōnagon (清少纳言, 966-1025). In his essay, Zhou translated some descriptions eulogizing children from *The Pillow Book*, including the one from the passage entitled, "Utsukushiki mono" ("Things adorable"). In these two essays and others, he illustrates the Japanese attitude of paying attention to common objects or events in everyday life and trying to draw from them *mono no aware* (物の哀れ, pathos or aesthetic sense). Fei Ming was familiar with *The Pillow Book*, perhaps through Zhou. Fei Ming quoted the phrase, "all small things are most adorable" from the same passage, "Things

he tried to develop a similar type of New Essay in Chinese.<sup>106</sup> His student Fei Ming's pastoral stories have many things in common with the *shaseibun*-school stories. It would seem that Fei Ming shared with Zhou Zuoren the hermitic 'lingering taste' of the Japanese modern stories developed from the *shaseibun*, and conveyed this taste in his own stories.<sup>107</sup>

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adorable" in his short story, "Wo de linshe", in December 1923. Fei Ming wrote describing the behaviour of the little boy, Ah Liu: "Ah Liu always forcibly occupied that low couch. -- It was indeed low and delicate, and I could not help remembering Sei Shōnagon's words; 'all small things are most adorable.'" (阿六总是强占那矮榻，——确也矮得精致，我不禁想起清少纳言『凡是细少的都可爱』的话来。)

See, Feng Wenbing, *Zhulin de gushi*, p. 82. This possibly shows an indirect Japanese influence on Fei Ming.

<sup>106</sup>When Zhou suggested his idea of Chinese New Literature with a local colour and individuality in his preface to *Old Dreams*, he implied an antipathy towards "the traditional patriotic false literature" (那些传统的爱国的假文学). See pp. 164-165 of this chapter. Kiyama Hideo (木山英雄) points out that behind Zhou's love for the Japanese *haiku* literature [by 'haiku literature', I mean *haiku*, *haibun*, *shaseibun* and the stories developed from *shaseibun*], there lay a feeling of revolt against the corruption and insincerity that prevailed among literati and officials (士大夫) ambitious to 'rise in the (political) world' in feudal China. See Kiyama Hideo, "Shū Sakujin - shisō to bunshō-" 周作人 - 思想と文章 -, *Chūgoku kindai no shisō to bungaku* 中国近代の思想と文学, ed. Tōkyō daigaku bungakubu Chūgoku bungaku kenkyūshitsu (Tokyo: Daian, 1967), pp. 188-189. See also Zhao Jinghua, "San, Wu'ai yu chanjing: suo shou Riben wenhua yishu de yingxiang yu qishi" 三，物哀与禅境：所受日本文化艺术的影响与启示, *Xunzhao jingshen jiayuan*, pp. 162-174.

<sup>107</sup>The writer, Shi Zhecun (施蛰存, 1905-) wrote in his article published in 1937: "In Fei Ming's writing, what conveys the feeling of reluctance to stop covetously caressing something, is perhaps the 'taste of *haiku*' in each word and sentence ..." (而他的文章之所以使你发生摩挲留连之趣者，大抵都在一字一句中的『俳趣』...) See Shi Zhecun, "Yiren yishu" 一人一书, *Yushoufeng*, No. 32 (1 January 1937). On the other hand, Yu Dafu, who probably did not fully recognize and appreciate Fei Ming's stories, commented in 1935: "In Japan, among Sōseki and Shiki's disciples, there emerged a group of literary men who had turned from composing *haiku* to concentrate on writing stories with a prosaic touch, and their achievements are worth noting. Even now I still often turn the pages of the writings by people of this group such as Takahama Kyoshi and Nagatsuka Takashi and read. It is a pity that such writers have not yet appeared in China. In the near future, I think, this kind of story will no doubt gradually also appear in China." (日本漱石及子规的门弟子之中，有一派从俳句出身的文人，专想以小品文的笔调来写小说，成绩也很有可观。象高次虚子，长塚节他们几个人的作品，我到现在还时时在翻读，可惜中国还没有这样的作家出现。不久的将来，我想这一种小说，中国也将逐渐产生出来的无疑。) See Yu Dafu, "Xiaopinwen zagan" 小品文杂感, collected in *Yu Dafu wenji* 郁达夫文集, Vol. 6 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1982), pp. 246-247.

In summary, Fei Ming's pastoral stories can be described as an intricate blend of elements absorbed from modern foreign pastoral stories and the traditional Chinese pastoral. Inspired first by George Eliot's modern pastoral novel, Fei Ming was further encouraged in his writing of Chinese modern pastoral 'fiction' by the foreign examples of modern pastoral stories such as Hardy's and (perhaps) such Japanese *shaseibun* as Suzuki's. While the rehabilitation of the expression of local colour and individuality was suggested by Zhou Zuoren after the initial fever of the Chinese New Culture Movement cooled down, Fei Ming elaborated his writing chiefly in the 'modern' genre of Chinese 'pastoral fiction' with some realistic elements based upon the memory of his own rural past.<sup>108</sup>

In his pastoral stories, Fei Ming applied a traditionally Chinese approach in presenting the relationship between man and nature. He also actively enhanced the poetic quality of his pastoral world by employing some traditional Chinese pastoral motifs or by quoting some traditional Chinese pastoral poems. Yet, the difference between Fei Ming's 'pastoral' and the traditional Chinese pastoral was indeed not only the genre but also the content. The pastoral world in his stories was not that of sheer idealism, but rather a compromise between, or fusion of, modern and traditional pastoral elements. This quality of Fei Ming's pastoral stories can be seen most clearly in his characterization: Fei Ming often chooses to write about rather

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<sup>108</sup>Before Fei Ming, Lu Xun had written some stories eulogizing the rural past such as "Guxiang" and "Shexi" 社戏. However, based on my limited experience of reading Chinese literature, Fei Ming was probably the first modern story-writer who wrote pastoral stories constantly throughout the 1920s. The famous pastoral writer, Shen Congwen, began writing after Fei Ming.

unlucky and poor people in unpleasant situations such as orphans, widows, widowers and the disfigured or disabled<sup>109</sup>, which is not typical of the highly idealized traditional pastoral. He balanced such deficiency in his characters' lives with their self-contained mental attitude, applying the traditionally Chinese, Daoist/Chan Buddhist transcendental view.<sup>110</sup>

Having examined the influences upon and characteristics of Fei Ming's thematic approach to his pastoral world, the next chapter will analyse the style of his pastoral stories.

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<sup>109</sup>For example, in "Wo de linshe", there appears a little boy with six fingers.

<sup>110</sup>See Chapter Three of this thesis. Also, A. C. Graham points out Zhuangzi's interest in 'marginal' figures. He wrote: "How to reconcile oneself to the body is therefore a crux for [Zhuangzi]. The 'Inner Chapters' show a remarkable interest, not shared by later Taoists even in [Zhuangzi] itself, in cripples, freaks, mutilated criminals, who are able to accept and remain inwardly unaltered by their condition." See A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao -- Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1989), p. 202.

## Chapter Five

### The Style of Fei Ming's Pastoral Stories

As shown in Chapter One, in the late 1920s and the 1930s, Fei Ming kept his own individual literary view and remained something of a 'loner'<sup>1</sup>, with a 'hermit and rebel' spirit, when some writers such as Lu Xun, Guo Moruo and Yu Dafu turned their hands to politics. In addition to this image, Fei Ming also distinguished himself in his pastoral stories as a stylist of some character. Some of his contemporaries noted this aspect of his writing. Zhou Zuoren, for example, wrote in his preface to *Jujubes* and *The Bridge* in 1931: "I feel that the primary reason why Mr Fei Ming's writing has its own value in the world of modern Chinese fiction is its stylistic beauty." (我觉得废名君的著作在现代中国小说界有他独特的价值者, 其第一的原因是其文章之美。) <sup>2</sup> Zhu Guangqian wrote of *The Bridge* in 1937: "*The Bridge* somehow sheds convention and is totally independent. Its form and style deserve to be called Mr Fei Ming's particular creation." (桥有所脱化而却无所依傍, 它的体裁和风格都不愧为废名先生的特创。) <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The writer and critic, Liu Xiwei (刘西谓 1906-1982, Li Jianwu's 李健吾 pen-name when writing literary criticism) commented in "Huamenglu" 画梦录 in *Juhuaqi* 咀嚼集 (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1936), pp. 190-191: "Every time I think of Fei Ming, the novelist who is so detached from the reading public, I ask myself; 'Isn't he solitary just like an island?' Among extant Chinese writers, there is no writer who makes me more curious than Mr Fei Ming ... What he produces has a strong individuality and stands aloof from the trends of the times; his is a place that will last, a 'Peach Blossom Spring' where a small number of people will go and forget how to return." (每次想到废名先生, 一个那样和广大读者无缘的小说作家, 我问自己, 是否真就和海岛一样孤绝。在现存的中国文艺作家里面, 没有一位更像废名先生引我好奇 ... 遂乃有强烈的个性, 不和时代为伍, 自有他永生的角落, 成为少数人流忘返的桃源。) See also, Sima Changfeng, *Zhongguo xin wenxue shi*, zhongjuan, pp. 3-7 and p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Zao he Qiao de xu" 枣和桥的序, *Zhou Zuoren sanwen chao*, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>Meng Shi, "Qiao", *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1 July 1937), pp. 185-186.

Fei Ming's stylistic characteristics in his pastoral stories lie both in structure and language. The most striking feature is the unconventional form which is a cross between story and essay<sup>4</sup>, and sometimes referred to by Chinese critics as 'essay-like fiction' ('sanwenhua xiaoshuo' 散文化小说).<sup>5</sup> His stories are occasionally described as 'poetic fiction' ('shiti xiaoshuo' 诗体小说).<sup>6</sup> One of the

<sup>4</sup> Zhou Zuoren suggested that: "What Fei Ming writes are originally stories, but I think that they can be read as essays. No, not only can they be read as essays, but they are perhaps more interesting this way." (废名所作本来是小说，但是我看这可以当小品散文读，不，不但是可以，或者这样更觉得有意味亦未可知。) See Zhou Zuoren, "Daoyan" 导言, *Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi, sanwen yiji* 中国新文学大系，散文一集 (Shanghai: Shanghai lianyou tushu gongsi, 1935), in which the six chapters, "Zhou" 洲, "Wanshougong" 万寿宫, "Songludeng" 『送路灯』, "Bei" 碑, and "Chapu" 茶铺 of *The Bridge* are collected. In the review, published in the magazine, *Xiandai*, No. 4 (1 August 1932), it was said of *The Bridge* that it was "indeed more appropriate to call it an 'essay serial' rather than a novel" (与其说是小说，实际上却不如说是连续性的散文). In his book, *Zhongguo xiandai wenxueshi (yi)* 中国现代文学史(一) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1979), p. 240, Tang Tao 唐弢 wrote of Fei Ming's fictions that: "although they are stories, their nature is actually closer to essays" (虽为小说，实近散文). Sima Changfeng wrote: "Fei Ming's stories are almost indistinguishable from 'essays'. Actually, his stories are more like 'essays' than 'stories'" (废名的小说几乎和散文没什么分别。其实他的小说，散文气味还多过小说气味) in *Zhongguo xinwenxue shi, zhongjuan*, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 5. Feng Jiannan, "Bianhouji", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 472. Ma Liangchun 马良春 mentioned 'xiaoshuo de sanwenhua' 小说的散文化 in his "Yiwei juyou tedu fengge de zuojia (daixu)" 一位具有独特风格的作家(代序), published in *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 5. Furthermore, Xie Zhixi 解志熙 used the term, 'sanwenhua shuqing xiaoshuo' (散文化抒情小说, 'essay-like lyrical fiction') in his article, "Xin de shenmei ganzhi yu yishu biaoqian fangshi -- lun Zhongguo xiandai sanwenhua shuqing xiaoshuo de yishu tezheng" 新的审美感知与艺术表现方式 -- 论中国现代散文化抒情小说的艺术特征, published in *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1988, No. 1, pp. 246-256, while Wang Zengqi 汪曾祺 comments that Fei Ming's "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove" can be described as 'juyou lianxuxing de sanwenshi' (具有连续性的散文诗, 'serialised lyric-poems') and that 'sanwenhua xiaoshuo shi shuqingshi' (散文化小说是抒情诗, 'essay-like fiction is lyrical poetry') in Wang Zengqi and Shi Shuqing 施叔青, "Zuowei shuqingshi de sanwenhua xiaoshuo -- yu dalu zuojia duitan zhi si" 作为抒情诗的散文化小说 -- 与大陆作家对谈之四, *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1988, No. 6, p. 58. Ni Moyan 倪墨炎 in "Lüetan Fei Ming de xiaoshuo" 略谈废名的小说 (published in *Yuwen xuexi* 语文学习, No. 4, 1985, pp. 49-53) points out (p. 50) the 'sanwenmei' (散文美 'essay-like beauty') of Fei Ming's "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove".

<sup>6</sup> For example, Ling Yu 凌宇, "Cong 'Taoyuan' kan Fei Ming yishu fengge de deshì" 从《桃园》看废名艺术风格的得失, *Shiyue* 十月, 1981, No. 1, p. 247. The critics Yang Jianlong 杨剑龙 and Wang Zengqi call Fei Ming's stories 'shihua xiaoshuo'

aims of this chapter is to analyze why and how Fei Ming's stories are 'essay-like' or 'poetic'. In fact, at a macrolevel, all these cross-genre descriptions stem from the lyricism in his work.

In writing his fiction, Fei Ming seems to have been aware of the idea of "lyric-poetic" story (抒情诗的小说) which had been introduced by Zhou Zuoren. In April 1920, Zhou published his translation of the story by the Russian writer, Aleksandr Kuprin (1870-1938), entitled "An Evening Visitor" (Chinese title: "Wanjian de laike" 晚间的来客)<sup>7</sup>, attaching his own annotation:

There is another intention in translating this piece, apart from introducing Kuprin's thought -- that is, to make known the existence of short stories in this form in modern literature. Stories do not only recount events and scenery, but can also express emotions. As the distinctive quality of literature is in the 'transmission of sentiments', then it is what the Naturalists describe and is still, in Zola's words, 'nature filtered through the author's disposition'. Therefore, as long as it possesses the distinctive quality of literature, this lyric-poetic story in its particular form is still a genuine 'story'. 'A story must be provided with vicissitudes of life for its content, and complication, climax and denouement for its structure': this kind of view is already antiquated, just like the three unities in seventeenth century drama<sup>8</sup>.

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(诗化小说, 'poem-like fiction'). See Yang Jianlong, "Lun Fei Ming xiaoshuo de shiyimei" 论废名小说的诗意美, *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1989, No. 8, p. 114, and Wang Zengqi, "Guanyu xiaoshuo yuyan (zhaji)" 关于小说语言 (札记), *Wenyi yanjiu*, 1986, No. 4, p. 60.

<sup>7</sup>Zhou Zuoren, trans. "Wanjian de laike", *Xinqingnian*, Vol. 7, No. 5 (1 April 1920). "An Evening Visitor" is related by the first-person narrator. The story-time (= plot-time: the duration of the purported events of the narrative. See Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, p. 62.) is very short: from the narrator's sitting in front of his desk under a lamp and hearing someone knocking on his door, to his letting the visitor enter. The entire story is about the narrator's association of metaphysical thoughts on life, love, destiny and death during this period.

<sup>8</sup>Here, Zhou is not referring to seventeenth century Chinese drama, but to the Western genre. 'The three unities' are the three principles of dramatic

我译这一篇，除却介绍 Kuprin 的思想之外，还有别的一种意思，——就是要表明在现代文学里，有这一种形式的短篇小说。小说不仅是叙事写景，还可以抒情；因为文学的特质，是在『感情的传染』，便是那纯自然派所描写，如 Zola 说，也仍然是『通过了著者的性情的自然』，所以这抒情诗的小说，虽然形式有点特别，但如果具备了文学的特质，也就是真实的小说。内容上必要有悲欢离合，结构上必要有葛藤，极点与收场，才得谓之小说：这种意见，正如十七世纪的戏曲的三一律，已经是过去的东西了。<sup>9</sup>

By attaching this comment, Zhou is apparently trying to promote the "lyrical poetic story" without traditional plot-structure, which is characterizable, for instance, in terms of Freytag's pyramid.<sup>10</sup>

Fei Ming refers to Kuprin's story in the chapter "To be Continued" ("Qie ting xiahui fenjie" 『且听下回分解』) of Part Two of *The Bridge*:

Yet on the way home that day from Shijia Village for the first time since his return, he simply sensed that 'an evening visitor' had arrived and felt everything in the world to be so fortuitous! His delight was beyond the bounds of the author's pen.

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structure which require a play to have a single plot occurring in one place and within one day. This idea was expanded from Aristotle's concept of 'unity of action' (a complete and ordered structure of actions, directed toward the intended effect, in which none of the component parts, or incidents, is unnecessary). Although he made no mention at all of the 'unity of place' (that the action be limited to a single location) and the 'unity of time' (that the time represented be limited to the two or three hours it takes to act the play, or at most to a single day of either twelve or twenty-four hours), Neoclassical critics of drama in Italy and France codified them into rules in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Fifth Edition, Fort Worth, Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Montreal, Toronto, London, Sydney, Tokyo: Holt, Rinehart and Wiston, Inc., 1988), pp. 188-189.

<sup>9</sup>Zhou Zuoren, "Wanjian de laike", *Xinqingnian*, Vol. 7, No. 5 (1 April 1920). The words, "Kuprin" and "Zola" are as they are in the original text.

<sup>10</sup>The German novelist and dramatist, Gustav Freytag's (1816-1895) diagrammatic representation of the structure of a tragedy in his *Technik des Dramas* (1863; English translation, *Technique of the Drama*, 1894). He characterized the typical plot of a five-act play as a pyramidal shape, consisting of a rising action, climax, and falling action. See *The Penguin Companion To Literature: Europe*, ed. Anthony Thorlby (First published 1969, revised edition, London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1971), p. 288, and Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1987, first paperback edition, 1989), p. 36.

然而那一天从外方回来以后第一次从史家庄回来，一路之上，他简直感到一个『晚间的来客』了，觉得世上的事情都『奇』得很！其欢喜，真不是执笔的人所能为力了。<sup>11</sup>

Here, by quoting the title of Kuprin's story, Fei Ming is metaphorically describing Xiaolin's feeling after his first meeting with Xizhu as an eligible young woman. In Kuprin's story, 'an evening visitor' has the symbolic meaning of 'destiny' in addition to the plain meaning of an 'actual' visitor whom the narrator is about to meet. Kuprin describes the narrator's suspense when not knowing what 'an evening visitor' might bring to his life. Fei Ming is alluding to this as he endows his novel with a suggestive profundity. Considering his closeness to Zhou Zuoren, one can assume that Fei Ming probably read Zhou's annotation as well as his translation, and that he was somewhat conscious of the non-conventional, plot(less) structure of Kuprin's "lyric-poetic style".<sup>12</sup>.

Apart from plotless structure and the unimportance of the "vicissitudes of life" descriptions, Zhou's note on Kuprin does not specify any other factors which contribute to the making of a "lyric-poetic" story. It seems therefore necessary to examine first how a "lyric-poetic" story works, before analyzing stylistic characteristics of Fei Ming's works at a microlevel.

On lyrical quality in poetry, Shuen-fu Lin writes:

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<sup>11</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 149-150.

<sup>12</sup>It is interesting to note that Shen Congwen, who acknowledges Fei Ming's literary influence on his story-writing, describes Fei Ming's style as 'shuqingshi de bidiao' (抒情诗的笔调, 'lyric-poetic style') in the note attached to his own short story, "Fufu" (夫妇, "The Lovers"), published in *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, Vol. 20, No. 11 (November 1929). Fei Ming's influence on Shen will be discussed in the conclusion of this thesis.

The experiential world of a lyric poet is reduced to one single point of view, one moment, or a series of moments of feeling, vision, or awareness, of the lyrical self. ... The self's momentary perception of the world remains, however, the controlling theme or feeling of a lyric. A lyricist's poetic act thus becomes the act of intuition and perception through which his self and the world are united. One may recall Fredrich Nietzsche's incisive view of the lyric poet as a Dionysian artist who reveals in a poetic image his oneness with the heart of the world. This singleness or oneness of the poetic act is the fundamental trait that separates lyric poetry from either drama or narrative. It is the most important mark of a lyric's structure and of lyrical quality.<sup>13</sup>

The passage indicates that lyrical quality comes through poetic imagery which is the representation of one's momentary internal feelings and perceptions, or to put it in another way, projection of inner self. It is then interesting to note Zhu Guanqian's following comment on *The Bridge*:

A writer must look outward, but Fei Ming's eyes always look inward. A writer must bury his ego inside his characters and let himself live his characters' lives, but Fei Ming's characters are all buried inside his ego and live the writer's life everywhere.

小说家须得把眼睛朝外看，而废名的眼睛却老是朝里看；小说家须得把自我沉没到人物性格里面去，让作者过人物的生活，而废名的人物都沉没在作者的自我里面，处处都是过作家的生活。<sup>14</sup>

Here, Zhu clearly points out the "inward looking" nature of Fei Ming's fiction, which indicates a link to lyrical quality. Zhu's point about Fei Ming's self-projection onto his characters in *The Bridge* will be discussed later.

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<sup>13</sup>Shuen-fu Lin, *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition: Chiang K'uei and Southern Sung Tz'u Poetry* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 143-144.

<sup>14</sup>Meng Shi, "Qiao", *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1 July 1937), p. 187.

Ralph Freedman's views in *The Lyrical Novel* seem to give a summary of the above discussion of "lyric-poetic story". Freedman describes a lyrical novel as "a hybrid genre that uses the novel to approach the function of a poem", and states that a lyrical novel assumes a unique form which transcends the causal and temporal movement of narrative within the framework of fiction.<sup>15</sup> He explains that what distinguishes lyrical from non-lyrical writing is a different concept of *objectivity*. He argues: it is a truism that the novel is not always realistic in the sense of being a 'truthful' reproduction of external life. But its main tradition (the tradition thought of when the term 'novel' comes to mind) separates the experiencing self from the world the experiences are about.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, the lyrical novel, as Freedman sees it, seeks to combine man<sup>17</sup> and world in a strangely inward, yet aesthetically objective, form.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the poetic imagination of the lyrical novelist functions differently from that of his conventional confrère. The world he creates from the materials given to him in experience becomes a 'picture' -- of relations which in the ordinary novel are produced by social circumstance, cause and effect, the schemes fashioned by chronology.<sup>19</sup> Freedman points out that a lyrical novel has such characteristics as an intensely inward projection of

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<sup>15</sup>Ralph Freedman, *The Lyrical Novel -- Studies in Hermann Hesse, André Gide, and Virginia Woolf* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>The words, "man", "his", "confrère", "he", "him", and so on are used to represent human beings in general here, as they are in Ralph Freedman's *The Lyrical Novel*.

<sup>18</sup>Ralph Freedman, *The Lyrical Novel*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 271.

experience, an underemphasis on character and an overemphasis on image and dream-like encounter.<sup>20</sup> He also writes that the characteristic differentiating lyrical from non-lyrical fiction is portraiture, the halting of the flow of time within constellations of images or figures.<sup>21</sup>

Fei Ming's pastoral stories are also sometimes known for their painterly effect.<sup>22</sup> This seems to be a result of his abundant use of imagery, the function of which, according to Yu-kung Kao and Tsu-lin Mei, "is to evoke a mental picture or to recall physical sensation".<sup>23</sup> Figuratively speaking, Fei Ming's pastoral stories can be said to be his expression, or 'pictures', of his 'dream' about his rural past as discussed in Chapters Three and Four.<sup>24</sup>

It seems clear that the marks of a lyrical novel surface most apparently in the plot-structure and the use of imagery. It is therefore necessary, next, to analyze the structural and linguistic features of Fei Ming's style in his pastoral stories, with a special focus on the plot-structure and the use of imagery, and to see how "lyric-poetic" his stories are.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>22</sup>Fang Xide 方锡德 combines the idea of prose and painting and discusses Fei Ming's stories as "fictional 'essay-like painting'" ("xiaoshuo 'sanwenhua'" 小说 "散文画") in his article, "Xiandai xiaoshuo zhong de 'sanwenhua'" 现代小说中的 "散文画", published in *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1990, No. 4, pp. 73-78.

<sup>23</sup>Yu-kung Kao and Tsu-lin Mei, "Syntax, Diction, and Imagery in T'ang Poetry", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 31 (1971), p. 120.

<sup>24</sup>Liang Bingjun 梁秉钧 also discusses Fei Ming's stories as one of the representative "Chinese modern lyrical stories" in his articles, "Zhongguo xiandai shuqing xiaoshuo (shang)" 中国现代抒情小说(上) and "Zhongguo xiandai shuqing xiaoshuo (xia)" 中国现代抒情小说(下), published in *Wenxun* 文讯, No. 64 (February 1991), pp. 63-68 and No. 65 (March 1991), pp. 54-59 respectively.

### The plot-structure in Fei Ming's pastoral stories

Fei Ming's pastoral stories do not follow a conventional plot-pattern. In the majority of traditional narrative forms, events occur in distribution: they are linked to each other as cause to effect, effects in turn causing other effects, until the final effect.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, events in such traditional narratives usually adhere to the principles of the beginning, middle and end as defined by Aristotle in his *Poetics*.<sup>26</sup> By contrast, Fei Ming's narratives are a patchwork of apparently isolated incidents: in other words, the chain of causality between these incidents is dissolved.

For instance, the short story written in September 1927, "The Peach Orchard", begins with a brief summary of the setting, that is, the main characters, a peach-grower Wang Laoda and his ill daughter Ah Mao, and their peach orchard. The incidents which happen in the story proceed as follows: On a late autumn evening, Ah Mao sits on a threshold and watches her father draw water from the well in the peach orchard. She looks at a half moon and the moss on the city wall. She stands under peach trees and talks with her father. The father tells his daughter, who is asleep bending over their desk, to go to bed properly. He locks the door of their small thatched house and puts the light on. The father and the feverish daughter who cannot

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<sup>25</sup>Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse -- Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 46. Also, A. A. Mendilow, *Time and the Novel* (London, New York: Peter Nevill Ltd, 1952), p. 169.

<sup>26</sup>A. A. Mendilow, *Time and the Novel*, pp. 162-163. Of course, not all traditional narratives fall into this pattern. See for example, Andrew Plaks' discussion of Chinese narrative in "Towards a Critical Theory of Chinese Narrative", *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays*, ed. Andrew H. Plaks (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 309-352.

sleep listen to the sound of the night watches and talk to each other. Two days later, the father goes to town and buys glass peaches for his daughter. On his way home, the glass peaches get smashed by a child by accident.

In this way, each event is a slice of scene from Wang and Ah Mao's life and apart from the smashing of the peaches at the end, there is hardly any interrelationship between individual incidents in the story. Fei Ming spends much more space on describing the feelings and perception of his characters. In other words, the story time is very short while the discourse time is long, which considerably slows the narrative tempo.

Again, the short story written in October 1927, "The Waterchestnuts Marsh", consists solely of sketches of scenery and serene village life, and there occurs no incident which forms part of a cause-effect relationship. The narrator relates a legend about the 'Pagoda of Washing-hands' ('Xishouta' 洗手塔) in Taojia Village and the episode of Deaf Chen's visit to 'the famous alley in town' called Shijia Well (Shijiajing 石家井), but neither do they anticipate a dramatic event nor are they dénouements. This pattern is to be found again in the novel, *The Bridge*. In general, each chapter in *The Bridge* is only loosely tied together by the common pastoral theme, the characters and the setting, and each could stand as an independent episode. Although there are a few chapters interrelated by causality, such as those dealing with the agony of the betrothed couple, Xiaolin and Qinzi, in the intricate love triangle<sup>27</sup>, the sense of 'plot' is extremely

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<sup>27</sup>See the chapters, "Lantern" ("Denglong" 灯笼), "Story" and "The Peach Wood" in Part Two.

faint in the novel, as such causality as exists is not established between obvious incidents but is reflected in the indirect descriptions of the characters' psychology.

Such peculiarity of plot-structure (or, perhaps more suitably, plotless-structure) in Fei Ming's pastoral stories becomes more evident when they are compared with other contemporary stories. For example, Tai Jingnong's (台静农, 1903-) short story written in June 1927, "Wedding Ceremony" ("Baitang" 拜堂)<sup>28</sup>, describes the period from the evening before, to the morning after, the secret midnight wedding ceremony of Wang Er (汪二) and his widowed sister-in-law. Tai depicts the couple's feeling of shame and guilt for their marriage which is the result of the widow's pregnancy and her brother-in-law's poverty, which denies him the opportunity of buying a 'new' wife for himself. The story proceeds as follows: In the evening, Wang Er visits Wu Sanyuan's (吴三元) grocery store to buy some incense, yellow sheets (黄表) and candles for his wedding. He returns home, and discusses the wedding ceremony with his sister-in-law, ignoring his father. At midnight, the widow visits Auntie Tian's (田大娘) house to ask her to be a witness at the wedding. The widow and Auntie Tian go to Second Sister Zhao's (赵二嫂) house to persuade her to be another witness. The three women return to Wang's house and the wedding ceremony takes place. The next morning at a teahouse, Wang Er's father grumbles at Wu San (吴三), a fellow villager, who congratulates him on his son's marriage, and

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<sup>28</sup>Tai Jingnong, "Baitang" [first published in *Mangyuan* 莽原, Vol. 2, No. 11 (10 June 1927)], *Zhongguo xiandai ge liupai xiaoshuo xuan* 中国现代各流派小说选, Vol. 1, ed. Yan Jiayan 严家炎 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1986), pp. 260-265.

drinks sulkily. From this brief illustration, it is obvious that each incident in the story forms a strict cause-effect sequence. Tai Jingnong employs the simple plot to enhance the 'reality' of his dark and pathological world which focuses on the human suffering created by traditional Chinese society and feudalistic ideology.<sup>29</sup>

Another example would be the short story written in January 1930, "A Slave Mother" ("Wei nuli de muqin" 为奴隶的母亲) by the left-wing writer, Rou Shi (柔石, 1902-1931).<sup>30</sup> It describes a tragic story about a woman who is the wife of a poor village peasant tanner and mother of an infant boy, Chunbao (春宝). It begins with the narrator's summary of the plight which led the diseased husband to the decision to mortgage his wife to a much older, wealthy, heirless man for three years. The husband tells his wife about the deal he has agreed in order to make money. The rest of the story proceeds as follows: The night before her departure for her new 'home', the woman talks to her son and her husband. The morning after, in spring rain, her sedan chair arrives and she tearfully parts with her child and husband. She arrives at the wealthy man's house and meets him and his equally old wife. She hears his wife's story explaining why it is her 'job' to bear his son in three years. The peasant tanner's wife's everyday life in her new 'home' is summarized: she and the wealthy man's wife do not get on.

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<sup>29</sup>William Tay points out the simplicity of the plots in Tai Jingnong's stories in *A Selective Guide To Chinese Literature 1900-1949, Volume II The Short Story*, ed. Zbigniew Slupski (Leiden, New York, København, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1988), p.190.

<sup>30</sup>"Wei nuli de muqin" was first published in *Mengya yuekan* 萌芽月刊 in 1 March 1930. It is collected in *Rou Shi xuanji* 柔石选集 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1986), pp. 295-317.

Meanwhile, the peasant tanner's wife becomes pregnant, and in early autumn, successfully gives birth to a boy. One month after the baby is born, the mother names him "Qiubao" (秋宝) thinking of Chunbao. The wealthy man cares for Qiubao and his mother more and more and begins to think of paying more money to keep her for three more years, which irritates his old wife. At Qiubao's first birthday party, the peasant tanner turns up to borrow money from his own wife for Chunbao's illness. His wife hands him a ring given to her by the wealthy man, which infuriates the donor. Angrily the wealthy man and his jealous wife make the weary peasant tanner's wife leave for her old home on foot. She goes back to her still impoverished home and sees Chunbao and her husband. Now there is an emotional distance between her and Chunbao, nor can she forget Qiubao, whom she left with the wealthy man.

In "A Slave Mother" as well as in "Wedding Ceremony", each incident is a trigger for the next incident. The story is well connected by causal sequences, and the narrator provides much summary of the situations between the elapsing time so that the reader feels a sense of thorough coherence. It is indeed quite contrary to Fei Ming's patchwork-approach to independent temporal events in his stories.

Fei Ming expressed his disregard for the causality of events in his stories in his note about *The Bridge* in 1930: "My writings whether novel or short story, do not contain much 'story'. So those who want to read a 'story' can simply turn away and not bother." (无论是长篇或短篇我一律是没有多大的故事的, 所以要读故事的人尽可以掉头而不

願。 )<sup>31</sup> To borrow William Tay's terms, Fei Ming stories are more "character-centred" than "plot-centred".<sup>32</sup> In other words, Fei Ming's main concern lies in the "representation of the psychological life of the characters", and "the events themselves hardly constitute an independent source of interest".<sup>33</sup> Such plotlessness of his pastoral stories makes it difficult to summarize what they are about, which indicates their 'lyric-poetic' quality. Roland Barthes wrote on the unsummarizable nature of a lyric poem:

In other words, narrative lends itself to *summary* ... At first sight this is true of any discourse, but each discourse has its own kind of summary. A lyric poem, for example, is simply the vast metaphor of a single signified and to summarize it is thus to give this signified, an operation so drastic that it eliminates the poem's identity (summarized, lyric poems come down to the signifieds *Love* and *Death*) -- hence the conviction that poems cannot be summarized. By contrast, the summary of a narrative (if conducted according to structural criteria) preserves the individuality of the message; narrative, in other words, is *translatable* without fundamental damage.<sup>34</sup>

Fei Ming's pastoral stories seem to be close to lyric poems in the way that they cannot be summarized "without fundamental damage". For

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<sup>31</sup>Fei Ming, "Qiao, fuji" 桥, 附记, *Luotuocao*, No. 14 (11 August 1930). Here, Fei Ming does not seem to use the word "story" ("*gushi*" 故事) in a strict narratological sense.

<sup>32</sup>William Tay, "Wang Meng, Stream-of-consciousness and the Controversy over Modernism", p. 13-15. By 'character-centred', Tay means that the representation of the psychological life of the characters is the main concern, and the events themselves hardly constitute an independent source of interest. It contrasts with 'plot-centred' by which he means that the events and their interrelationship constitute the main source of interest, whereas the characters and their inner world, if not entirely at the service of the external action, are only of minor interest.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives", *Image - Music - Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (First published in Great Britain 1977, London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1984), pp. 120-121.

instance, a summary of Part One of *The Bridge* would be "children's innocence and serene rural traditional everyday Chinese life", and that of "The Water-chestnuts Marsh" would be "Deaf Chen's everyday life in Taojia Village". In fact, all of Fei Ming's pastoral stories could be summarized ultimately by one phrase, "depiction of peaceful rural everyday life", and thus lose their individuality completely.

### **Time in Fei Ming's pastoral stories**

Fei Ming was struck by foreign literary ideas such as Kuprin's "lyrical-poetic story", newly introduced to China, probably for the same reason that he was also attracted to the spatial interweaving of images, independent of any time/causal-sequence, in traditional Chinese poetry. He wrote about his fascination with the non-causal relationship between time and space in classical Chinese poetry:

Lastly, I'd like to say that I am fond of the line in a *ci* poem; "In drizzle, I am back from my dream of the far-off frontier." This *ci* line is, I think, as witty as the lines in another poem; "From Cold Mountain Temple outside Suzhou, the sound of the midnight bell reaches my passenger boat." Talking of time and space, is there any definite relationship between the sound of the midnight bell and the boat? The passenger would say there is no causal relationship. Yet, the line describing the sound of the midnight bell reaching the passenger boat is beautiful. The line "In drizzle, I am back from my dream of the far-off frontier," describes the situation of going to the frontier in a dream and waking up and hearing the patter of drizzle. In the same way, talking of time and space, there is no causal relationship between drizzle and waking up from the dream of the frontier, either. Perhaps there is only an expression of a somewhat unbelievable feeling about the dream after waking up because of the drizzle outside the window.

最后我想说我喜欢『细雨梦回鸡塞远』这一句词。这一句词，我想同诗里『姑苏城外寒山寺，夜半钟声到客船』是相似的妙趣，就时间与空间说，夜半

钟声与客船到岸一定有什么关系呢？客曰没有什么因果关系。然而夜半钟声到客船诗句则美。同样，梦到鸡塞去了一趟，醒来乃听见淅沥淅沥的下着细雨，于是就写着细雨梦回鸡塞远，就时间与空间说，细雨与梦回鸡塞也没有因果关系，大约因为窗外细雨，梦回乃有点不相信的神情罢了。<sup>35</sup>

Fei Ming was inspired by traditional Chinese poems in their way of presenting images spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a causal sequence, and wrote his pastoral stories without a strong plot.

Fei Ming's narratives also tend to dispense with the conventional chronological sequence of events, which gives the reader a dispersed impression of their 'stories'.<sup>36</sup> For example, in "Partridges" written in 1924, Fei Ming shifts the presentness of the narration constantly, using a time-shift technique. He reveals the flow of the first-person narrator's thoughts and feelings of the day when he returns to his parents' house in the countryside, in the following sequence: on the way to his parents' house in the morning -- before starting the journey -- the arrival at his parents' house in the morning -- the memory of his childhood girlfriend, Youzi, the previous winter -- at his parents' house in the evening -- the memory of Youzi early that summer -- at his parents' house at night. As a result, the gap between the incidents that happened on the day when the narrator

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<sup>35</sup>Fei Ming, "Suibi" 随笔, *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1 May 1937). The first *ci* poem is "Shan hua zi" 山花子 by Li Jing 李璟 (916-961), and the second poem is "Fengqiao ye bo" 枫桥夜泊 by Zhang Ji 张继.

<sup>36</sup>'Story' here is taken to mean 'what is narrated' or 'the formal content element of narrative', as opposed to 'discourse' which is about 'how it is narrated' or the formal expression element. This is close to Seymour Chatman's definition in *Story and Discourse*, p. 19 and Gérard Genette's 'the signified or narrative content'. See Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse -- An Essay In Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, first published in French 1972, fourth printing in English 1990), p. 27.

returned to his parents' house, and the episodes related to Youzi in his memory, is hardly noticeable.<sup>37</sup>

The time-shift technique of describing the events backwards and forwards over the past, disregarding the notion of consecutiveness is employed also in other 'Yan' series stories such as "Youzi", "The Half Year", "My Neighbours" and "First Love", and his short pastoral stories in the third-person narrative such as "A Willow Tree at the Riverside".<sup>38</sup> In the short stories, "A Washerwoman" and "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove", Fei Ming applies the flashback method of narration.<sup>39</sup> This reduction of the importance of chronological time and plot is the inevitable outcome of his attention to psychological time and his diminution of the importance of action.

Both Chen Pingyuan (陈平原)<sup>40</sup> and Henry Zhao<sup>41</sup> suggest that the narrative dislocation of the sequential order of events was virtually

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<sup>37</sup>According to A.A. Mendilow, the time-shift, which is also called 'chronological looping', is a way of distributing the expository matter over a whole novel; a deliberate fragmentation of the sequence. In effect, all sense of continuity is lost, and the gaps between the incidents treated remain therefore unnoticed. See Mendilow, *Time and the Novel*, p. 75 and p. 54.

<sup>38</sup>See Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>39</sup>Chen Pingyuan points out that some of the writers of the Qiancao and Chenzhong Societies who studied foreign literature tended to lay stress on the a-chronological nature of their characters' feelings and distort chronological time consciously in their stories. See Chen Pingyuan, "Zhongguo xiaoshuo xushi shijian de zhuanbian -- cong 'xin xiaoshuo' dao 'xiandai xiaoshuo'" 中国小说叙事时间的转变——从“新小说”到“现代小说”, *Wenyi yanjiu*, No. 3, 1987, p. 70.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>41</sup>Henry Zhao writes in "The Uneasy Narrator" (manuscript, p. 268) that only in some eighteenth century masterpieces did Chinese vernacular fiction achieve a certain degree of dislocation of the strict causal-temporal order. He also points out (ibid., pp. 242-249) that in traditional Chinese fiction, there were only two types of temporal dislocation: flashforward and flashback. He explains that flashforwards were often used to make the story more the exposition of process and to arouse the reader's curiosity. Yet, he writes, "the dominance of flashforwards in Chinese fiction ... greatly helped to maintain narrative lineality ..."

minimal in traditional Chinese fiction before the twentieth century.<sup>42</sup> Chen and Zhao point out that modern Chinese writers of the May Fourth period began to pay attention to characters' internal worlds rather than their actions, and applied new, unconventional ways of handling time after reading foreign literature.<sup>43</sup> Ying-hsiung Chou and Chen Sihe suggest that some modern Chinese writers owed their rejection of the empirical to the influence of Bergson, Freud and the French Symbolists, and point out that modern Chinese writers came under the influence of Bergson and Freud mainly through the mediation of the Japanese critic, Kuriyagawa Hakuson (厨川白村, 1880-1923), author of *Symbols of Agony* (*Kumon no shōchō* 苦闷の象徴), translated into Chinese by Lu Xun.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Among traditional non-chronological writings, one could perhaps think of Shen Fu's *Fusheng liuji*. However, it is not a 'fiction' but a 'memoir'. Stephen Owen refers to it as "memoirs" in his book, *Remembrances: The Experience of the Past in Classical Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 101. Also, Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Lubomír Doležel do not call it a "fiction" but "confessional prose" in their article, "An Early Chinese Confessional Prose Shen Fu's Six Chapters of a Floating Life", published in *T'oung Pao*, Vol. 58 (1972), pp. 137-160. Besides, *Fusheng liuji* was not widely circulated until it was reprinted in the magazine *Yanlaihong* 雁来红 in 1906. (According to Lin Yutang 林语堂, the first publication of *Fusheng liuji* was sometime between 1810 and 1830, but the edition has not yet been found. In 1877, an edition was published, which soon went out of print.) See Lin Yutang's preface to *Fusheng liuji* (annotated by Tang Shaohua 唐绍华; Taipei: Liming wenhua shiye gongsi, 1985), pp. 1-4, and Matsueda Shigeo's 松枝茂夫 "Comments" ("Kaisetsu" 解说) in his Japanese translation, *Fusei rokki* 浮生六记 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1981, rpt. 1982), pp. 263-268.

<sup>43</sup>Chen Pingyuan, "Zhongguo xiaoshuo xushi shijian de zhuanbian -- cong 'xin xiaoshuo' dao 'xiandai xiaoshuo'", *Wenyi yanjiu*, No. 3, 1987, p. 68. Henry Zhao, "The Uneasy Narrator" (manuscript), p. 248 and pp. 275-276.

<sup>44</sup>Ying-hsiung Chou and Chen Sihe, "Western Literature in Modern China", *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism*, ed. Martin Coyle, Peter Garside, Malcolm Kelsall and John Peck (London: Routledge, first published 1990, rpt. 1991), pp. 1212-1213. See also, Yu Fenggao 余凤高, "Xinli fenxi" yu Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo "心理分析" 与中国现代小说 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1987), p. 42. *Symbols of Agony* was first published in February 1924 in Japan. Lu Xun translated it into Chinese and published the first and second parts of it serially in *Chenbao fujian* from the first to the thirty first of

Fei Ming once acknowledged that he was stimulated by *Symbols of Agony* <sup>45</sup>, and he also attached as the foreword to his first collection of short stories, *A Tale of a Bamboo Grove*, his Chinese translation of Charles Baudelaire's (1821-1867) prose poem, "Windows"<sup>46</sup> ("Les Fenêtres")<sup>47</sup>, illustrating his view that literature is

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October 1924. He published a complete translation in book form, *Kumen de xiangzheng* 苦闷的象征, in March 1925. He also used it as teaching material at universities such as Peking Women's Normal University (北京女子师范大学). As for the strong influence of such works of Kuriyagawa as *Symbols of Agony* on Chinese writers of the 1920s, see Ching-mao Cheng, "The Impact of Japanese Literary Trends on Modern Chinese Writers", *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, ed. Merle Goldman (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 63-88. (In Cheng's essay, there are misprints on p. 85: the Japanese title for *Symbols of Agony* should be *Kumon no shōchō*, rather than *Kumō no shōchō*.)

<sup>45</sup>When the short story, "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove" was first published in February 1925, Fei Ming wrote as its 'adjunct' (赘语): "Recently, one or two of my friends have said that it is easy to tell my writings, by which they mean that the subject matter is narrow. I admit this is so, but do not wish to change it, for although I could write on other subjects, when I'm actually writing, I find I lose interest in them. It is only for this narrow range that I have such great interest. The poem entitled "Windows" by Baudelaire which Kuriyagawa Hakuson quoted to explain 'appreciation' is, I think, still the best explanation for my way of writing." (近来有一二友人说, 我的文章很容易知道是我的, 意思是, 方面不广。我承认, 但并不想改, 因为别方面的东西我也能够写, 但写的时候自己就没有兴趣, 独有这一类兴趣非常大。波特来尔题作窗户的那首诗, 厨川白村拿来作赏鉴的解释, 我却以为是我创作时的最好的说明了。) See *Yu Si*, No. 14 (16 February 1925). For Kuriyagawa's view on the 'appreciation of literary works' and his quotation of Baudelaire's poem, see *Kuriyagawa Hakuson zenshū* 厨川白村全集, Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kaizōsha, 1929), pp. 183-189.

<sup>46</sup>Baudelaire's prose poem reads:

He who looks in through an open window never sees as much as he who looks at a window that is shut. There is nothing more profound, more mysterious, more fertile, more sinister, or more dazzling, than a window, lighted by a candle. What we can see in the sunlight is always less interesting than what transpires behind the panes of a window. In that dark or luminous hole, life lives, life dreams, life suffers.

Across the waves of roofs, I see a woman of mature years, wrinkled, and poor, who is always bending over something, and who never goes out. From her face, from her dress, from her gestures, out of almost nothing, I have made up the woman's story, or rather her legend, and sometimes I say it over to myself, and weep.

If it had been a poor old man, I could have made up his just as easily. And I go to bed, proud of having lived and suffered in others.

the symbol of that which lies deep inside his inner life.<sup>48</sup> In his essay, "Talking of Dreams", he also shows his familiarity, through Kuriyagawa Hakuson, with a kind of Freudian psychoanalytic criticism:

I think that if I wrote down how every piece of my writing had been born -- of course, I wouldn't be able to write clearly on some of them -- it would be something meaningful, and I might perhaps be able to prove many of Kuriyagawa Hakuson's words. For example, I wrote "A Willow Tree at the Riverside",

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Perhaps you will say to me: "Are you sure that it is the true story?" What does it matter, what does any reality outside of myself matter, if it has helped me to live, to feel that I am, and what I am?

This English translation of "Les Fenêtres" is by the critic and poet, Arthur Symons (1865-1945) and taken from *Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Selected Verse and Prose Poems*, edited, with an introduction by Joseph M Bernstein (New York: The Citadel Press, 1947), p. 109.

<sup>47</sup>Before Fei Ming, Zhou Zuoren had already translated the poem into Chinese and published it in 1922. See Zhong Mi 仲密, "Chuang (sanwenshi)" 窗 (散文诗), *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (10 March 1922). Lu Xun had also translated it into Chinese, consulting Kuriyagawa's Japanese translation and Max Bruns' German translation, and published his version in *Chenbao fujian*, No. 254 (26 October 1924). However, Fei Ming, Zhou and Lu Xun all produced different versions. The meaning in the three versions are the same, but Fei Ming's Chinese in his translation is the plainest and most colloquial (vernacular) and the most readable, as concise phrases and simple sentence structures are used. In Lu Xun's translation, there are longer adjectives, while in Zhou Zuoren's the old-fashioned 'zhi' 之 is used instead of 'de' 的.

<sup>48</sup>It is interesting that Ralph Freedman points out that French prose poetry in the nineteenth century produced a pattern to which later Western lyrical novels responded and conformed. He gives Baudelaire's prose poetry, "Petits Poèmes en prose" [one of which is "Windows"] as an example. He writes that in "Petits Poèmes en prose", the poet and his mask -- the narrator and the figure on the prose-poem's stage -- dramatize an internal conflict and symbolize it objectively through a situation or object. Such symbolic drama which contracts and intensifies the progression of images presented in Baudelaire's prose poems is namely what is found in the lyrical novel. In the lyrical novel, narrator and protagonist combine to create a self in which experience is fashioned as imagery; See Ralph Freedman, *The Lyrical Novel*, pp. 31-34. In Fei Ming's case, as discussed in the previous chapters, he "dramatizes his internal conflict" about the rapidly changing urban life and "symbolizes" it through the creation of his pastoral world where the peaceful, simple, old-fashioned Chinese way of life still exists. Fei Ming's "symbolic [pastoral] drama" also "contracts and intensifies the progression of images", something which shall be discussed below.

as I had stood under a willow tree by chance somewhere during a certain kind of life; 'The Poet' in "Fireworks" was inspired from somewhere. My friend, J, has urged me to do this, but it is rather a lonely thing to do.

我想，倘若我把我每篇文章之所以产生，写出来，——自然有些是不能够分明的写出来的，当是一件有意义的事，或者可以证明厨川白村的许多话。好比我写《河上柳》，是在某一种生活之中，偶然站在某地一棵杨柳之下；《花炮》里的《诗人》，是由某地起感。我的朋友J曾怂恿我这样做，但这又颇是一件寂寞的事呵。<sup>49</sup>

Some Chinese critics describe Fei Ming's narrative technique of fragmentation according to the development of the characters' associations of thought and imagery, as the stream-of-consciousness technique which was also developed under the influence of Bergson and Freud.<sup>50</sup> However, they seem to use the term rather loosely and confusedly without giving their clear definitions of it.<sup>51</sup>

The term 'stream-of-consciousness' was coined by William James (1842-1910), an American philosopher and the elder brother of the

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<sup>49</sup>Fei Ming, "Shuomeng", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 319.

<sup>50</sup>Mendilow points out the direct and powerful influence of Bergson and Freud on the whole trend of modern (Western) fiction. He writes that much of modern fiction, especially the stream-of-consciousness novel, owes its new conception of character, plot and structure to Bergson's theory of flow, *durée*. According to Bergson and his school, as Mendilow explains, the intellect is an instrument forged by evolution to render action in a world of continuous flux possible. It congeals the living flow of reality into congeries of discontinuous acts, or hypostatizes it into forms and concepts. The natural bent of human mentality tries to derive movement from a primary stasis, whereas movement is original and fixed states are secondary abstractions derived from it. This flow can be perceived only by rejecting intellectual formulations and yielding to the direct 'intuition' of experience. When this is achieved, it is possible to arrive at a new understanding of the relations of the tenses, once the indivisible continuity of change is appreciated. See Mendilow, *Time and the Novel*, pp. 145-156.

<sup>51</sup>For example, the two articles by Ling Yu, "Cong 'Taoyuan' kan Fei Ming yishu fengge de deshi" (in *Shiyue*, No. 1, 1981, p. 246 and p. 248) and "Zhongguo xiandai shuqing xiaoshuo de fazhan guiji ji qi rensheng neirong de shenmei xuanze" 中国现代抒情小说的发展轨迹及其人生内容的审美选择 (in *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan*, No. 2, 1983, p. 233). Also, Yang Yi, "Fei Ming xiaoshuo de tianyuan fengwei" 废名小说的田园风味, *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan*, No. 1, 1982, p. 31.

novelist Henry James, to describe the flow of thoughts of the waking mind, but is now widely used in a literary context to refer to different techniques as well as a fictional subgenre. Even in the West, the term has sometimes been used misleadingly; a very common case seems to be the synonymous use of the two terms, 'interior monologue' (an extended stretch of free direct thought) and 'stream-of-consciousness'.<sup>52</sup> I adopt William Tay's view which accepts Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg's idea that stream-of-consciousness is any presentation in literature of the illogical, ungrammatical, mainly associative patterns of human thought<sup>53</sup>, and which follows the principle maintained by Seymour Chatman that stream-of-consciousness is identified when interior monologue co-occurs with free association.<sup>54</sup>

When examined closely according to this definition, Fei Ming's pastoral stories are clearly not written with the stream-of-consciousness technique. For instance, the following passage from

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<sup>52</sup>William Tay discusses the distinction between 'interior monologue' and 'stream-of-consciousness', and makes a clear definition of 'stream-of-consciousness' in his article, "Wang Meng, Stream-of-consciousness, and the Controversy over Modernism", published in *Modern Chinese Literature*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (September 1984), pp. 7-10.

<sup>53</sup>Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 177, quoted in Tay, "Wang Meng, Stream-of-consciousness, and the Controversy over Modernism", p. 8.

<sup>54</sup>Tay, "Wang Meng, Stream-of-consciousness, and the Controversy over Modernism", p. 8. Tay comes to the conclusion that (p. 10): "Free association, which always results in a seemingly random, illogical, and ungrammatical presentation, must be maintained as an important guideline for the identifying of stream-of-consciousness." Henry Zhao (=Zhao Yiheng 赵毅衡) also discusses the definition of stream-of-consciousness and draws the same conclusion as Tay, in his article, "Xiaoshuo xushu zhong de zhuanshuyu" 小说叙述中的转述语, published in *Wenyi yanjiu*, No. 5, 1987, pp. 78-87.

"The Peach Orchard" is occasionally quoted by critics as an example of Fei Ming's use of the stream-of-consciousness technique<sup>55</sup>:

Ah Mao had stroked these many trees with her little hand, no, every one of these trees had been grown, cradled by Ah Mao personally!\*[i] -- Was it Daddy's watering that had made them grow so big?\*[ii] She remembered the mountain top full of tombs outside town, and her Mummy had a tomb too.\*[iii] -- Wouldn't it be nice if Mummy's tomb was in the yard here? Why did Daddy quarrel with Mummy?\*[iv] Once he'd kicked over a basket of peaches, and Ah Mao had put the peaches back in the basket one by one!\*[v] What's to be done if *tiangou*<sup>56</sup> really ate the sun?..... \*[vi]  
阿毛用了她的小手摸过这许多的树，不，这一棵一棵的树是阿毛一手抱大的！\*[i] —— 是爸爸拿水浇得这么大吗？\*[ii] 她记起城外山上满山的坟，她的妈妈也有一个，\*[iii] —— 妈妈的坟就在这园里不好吗？爸爸为什么同妈妈打架呢？\*[iv] 有一回一箩桃子都踢翻了，阿毛一个一个的朝箩里拣！\*[v] 天狗真个把日头吃了怎么办呢？..... \*[vi]<sup>57</sup>

Part [i] is the narrator's narration; [ii] is the narrator's internal analysis of Ah Mao's thought as it is mediated by a dash<sup>58</sup>; [iii] is the narrator's narration; [iv] could almost be taken as Ah Mao's interior monologue<sup>59</sup>, but is mediated again by a dash; [v] is the narrator's

<sup>55</sup>See for example, Ling Yu in his article, "Cong 'Taoyuan' kan Fei Ming yishu fengge de deshi", pp. 246-247 and Yang Yi in his article, "Fei Ming xiaoshuo de tianyuan fengwei", pp. 30-31.

<sup>56</sup>Ancient legend stated that an eclipse was caused by Tiangou's swallowing the sun. 'Tiangou chibuliao ritou' (天狗吃不了日头) is a saying which means evil cannot beat good. According to *Zhongguo shenhua chuanshuo cidian* 中国神话传说词典, ed. Yuan Ke 袁珂 (Shanghai: Shanghai cidian chubanshe, 1985), p. 66, 'Tiangou' is the name of a demon in the moon.

<sup>57</sup>Fei Ming, "Taoyuan", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p.146. The asterisks and numerals in parentheses are mine.

<sup>58</sup>Gerald Prince defines 'free direct discourse', on which 'free direct thought' (= interior monologue) is based, as "a type of discourse whereby a character's utterances or thoughts are (presumably) given as the character formulates them, without any narratorial mediation (TAGS, quotation marks, dashes, etc.)". See Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology*, p. 34. (Capital letters are in the original.)

<sup>59</sup>According to Dorrit Cohn, 'interior monologue' is a discourse addressed to no one, a gratuitous verbal agitation without communicative aim. See Dorrit

internal analysis<sup>60</sup> of Ah Mao's thought, as the word, 'Ah Mao' (阿毛), is used instead of 'I' (我); [vi] is free association and could again be taken almost as Ah Mao's interior monologue, but it is followed by the narratorial mediation of the ellipsis mark (.....). Thus, no free associative interior monologue can be found in this passage.<sup>61</sup> Fei Ming shows Ah Mao's inner world, that is, her spontaneous thoughts and memories in the narrator's words.

Fei Ming does sometimes use a form very close to that of free direct thought in his narratives, but usually mediates the parts with a dash, or an ellipsis mark, or an explanation in brackets. For example, in another passage from "The Peach Orchard":

She stood under the tree, holding a wicker basket and looking at Daddy picking peaches\*[i], above the grove the sky didn't seem to exist; the sky was the peaches and the peach leaves\*[ii], -- Is it this tree? Will this tree become so luxuriant again next year?\*[iii] It would be so good if she was not suffering from illness then!\*[iv] It wasn't so much the peach blossoms she liked, but the wind blowing the flowers inside the well! She threw a stone into the well\*[v], Daddy doesn't know!\*[vi] (This means that no one knew.) ..... \*[vii]

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Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 225.

<sup>60</sup>'Internal analysis' is a narrator's account, in his or her own words, of a character's thoughts and impressions; a narrative report of thoughts and impressions in words that are recognizably the narrator's. Seymour Chatman used the word in *Story and Discourse*. It corresponds to Dorrit Cohn's term, "psychonarration" in her *Transparent Minds*.

<sup>61</sup>Ying Jinxiang 应锦襄 also quotes this passage and argues that Fei Ming used free association here but not the stream-of-consciousness technique. However, his use of the word, 'free association' seems confused: he wrote: "Fei Ming's free association is also bound to bring out chronological criss-cross, but is unified by a clear core of thought." (废名的自由联想当然也免不了时序交错, 但还有明显的思维核心统一着。) See Ying Jinxiang, "Xiandai pai dui Zhongguo ershi niandai xiaoshuo zhi yingxiang" 现代派对中国二十年代小说之影响, *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1988, No. 11, pp. 165-166.

她站在树下，抱着箩筐，看爸爸摘桃，\*[i] 林子外不像再有天，天就是桃，就是桃叶，\*[ii]——是这个树吗？这个树，到明年又是那么茂盛吗？\*[iii] 那时她可不要害病才好！\*[iv] 桃花她不见得怎样的喜欢，风吹到井里去了她喜欢！她还丢了一块石头到井里去了哩，\*[v] 爸爸不晓得！\*[vi]（这就是说没有人晓得 .....\*[vii]<sup>62</sup>

Part [i] is the narrator's straight narration; [ii] is the narrator's internal analysis of Ah Mao's perception; [iii] could be almost taken as Ah Mao's interior monologue, but is mediated by a dash; [iv] is the narrator's internal analysis of Ah Mao's thought. The first sentence of Part [v] is the narrator's internal analysis of Ah Mao's thought, and the rest of [v] is the narrator's straight narration. Part [vi] could be almost taken as Ah Mao's free direct thought, but is followed by the narrator's clear explanation in brackets and the ellipsis mark in [vii]. Again, in this passage, the narrator enters into Ah Mao's mind and reveals her internal life.

It is, in fact, quite hard to find the use of 'complete' free direct thought in Fei Ming's pastoral stories. The next passage from the chapter, "Tree" of *The Bridge* contains a form which marks a kind of mid-point between free direct thought and the narrator's internal analysis of the character's thought:

On the tree trunk were three ants and Xizhu said, cherishing them:

"Look, the ants are on the tree. How free they are!"\*[i]

Qinzi also looked with her, the ants made tracks so randomly.\*[ii] But it was unknown whether or not they understood the girls' words.\*[iii]

树干上两三个蚂蚁，细竹稀罕一声道：

『你看，蚂蚁上树，多自由。』\*[i]

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<sup>62</sup>Fei Ming, "Taoyuan", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 147. The asterisks and numerals in parentheses are mine.

琴子也就跟了她看，蚂蚁的路线走得真随便。\*[ii] 但不知它懂得姑娘的  
语言否？\*[iii]<sup>63</sup>

Part [i] is the narrator's narration followed by the character's (=Xizhu's) dialogue; Part [iii] is the narrator's statement. The curious part is [ii]. Here, the first half is obviously the narrator's straight narration, and the rest; "the ants made tracks so randomly" (蚂蚁的路线走得真随便) seems like a direct description of Qinzi's thought as she formulates it. The laxity of Chinese language regarding tense eliminates one of the clearest clues for distinguishing the character's free direct thought from the narrator's internal analysis. This kind of 'merged discourse'<sup>64</sup> is often seen in Fei Ming's pastoral stories and indeed could be seen as one of Fei Ming's most important stylistic characteristics, even an identifying mark. What distinguishes such examples of merged discourse from free direct thought is Fei Ming's use of a comma rather than a full stop, which has the effect of blurring the lines between free direct thought and the narrator's internal analysis. In other words, the narrator's voice and the character's voice appear blurred. Merged discourse gives the reader an impression of entering the character's mind directly and thus enhances the immediacy of the character's inner thoughts or perceptions. This contributes a lyrical element to the story, remembering Shuen-fu Lin's words that: "the experiential world of a

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<sup>63</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 338. The asterisks and numerals in parentheses are mine.

<sup>64</sup>My own term, referring to the combination of a character's free direct thought and the narrator's internal analysis of a character's thought within one sentence. In most examples of merged discourse used by Fei Ming, the ambiguity seems to lie in the latter half of sentences. For the sake of convenience, I shall refer to this form as "merged discourse" hereafter.

lyric poet is reduced to one single point of view, one moment ... of the lyrical self".<sup>65</sup>

However, there is an example of Fei Ming's use of free direct thought in the chapter, "The Setting Sun" of *The Bridge*:

Xiaolin strained his ears and listened; such a good man like Mute Third Uncle was a beggar, too!\*[i] ... Xiaolin felt it somewhat strange that a beggar had become a long-term hired hand. He suddenly wanted to ask him the ins and outs of it all and his tongue was racing to go, but felt awkward about bringing it up.\*[ii] Anyway, Mute Third Uncle is a good man who couldn't be better.\*[iii]

小林竖着耳朵听，三哑叔这样的好人也讨饭！\*[i] ... 小林又有点奇怪，讨米的怎么又变到长工，他急于想问一问底细，舌头在那里动，觉得这是不好开口的。\*[ii] 总之三哑叔是再好没有的一个人。\*[iii]<sup>66</sup>

Part [i] is another example of the merged discourse discussed earlier. The first half of the sentence is clearly the narrator's straight narration, but the second half; "such a good man like Mute Third Uncle was a beggar, too!" (三哑叔这样的好人也讨饭！) switches into the direct description of Xiaolin's thought exactly as he formulates it. Part [ii] is the narrator's straight narration. Part [iii] can be taken as Xiaolin's free direct thought. However, it could also be the intrusive narrator's comment on the situation as the tense in the Chinese text is not clear.

Most of the time Fei Ming's descriptions of his characters' thoughts or perceptions are not free-associative but quite logical and systematic. To take another example from "The Peach Orchard":

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<sup>65</sup>See p. 187 of this chapter.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-30. The asterisks and numerals in parentheses are mine.

Daddy is so nice, Ah Mao is almost crying!\*[i] -- Why did he quarrel with Mummy in the first place? He still had to go to town in the middle of the night! Drinking at home wasn't enough, he still had to go out to the pub! But Mummy obviously knew she shouldn't always lock the door so early even if Daddy didn't come home. Mummy must be feeling sorry for Daddy, too, now!\*[ii]

爸爸实在是好，阿毛可要哭了！\*[i]——当初为什么同妈妈打架呢？半夜三更还要上街去！家里喝了不算还要到酒馆里去喝！但妈妈明知道爸爸在外面没有回也不应该老早就把门关起来！妈妈现在也要可怜爸爸罢！\*[ii]<sup>67</sup>

Part [i] is the narrator's narration, as the word, 'Ah Mao' is used instead of 'I'. The long part [ii] could be Ah Mao's interior monologue were it not mediated by a dash. The association of Ah Mao's thought here is totally logical.

Another example is found in the "Tablet" ("Bei" 碑) chapter of *The Bridge* :

The stones are really so peculiarly large, and dark! How come they are dark? And they aren't pictures! .....\*[i] Hesitating, he saw all the stones covering the mountain, every one of them dark. The branches of the trees were also dark. The greenness of the mountain and the leaves of the trees would naturally be no problem.\*[ii] On the very top of the mountain was a single stone, the highest one, almost touching the sky, -- did something move above it? A sparrow hawk! Flying onto the stone, no, flying in the sky, in circles. The blue sky is far above the mountain, with the dark sparrow hawk and the dark stone between them.\*[iii]

石头倒的确是特别的大，而且黑！石头怎么是黑的？又不是画的.....\*[i] 这一迟疑，满山的石头都看出来，都是黑的。树枝子也是黑的。山的绿，树叶子的绿，那自然是不能生问题。\*[ii] 山顶的顶上有一个石头，惟它最高哩，挨了天，——上面什么动？一只鸢鹰！一动，飞在石头之上了，不，飞在天之间，打圈子。青青的天是远在山之上，黑的鸢鹰，黑的石头，都在其间。\*[iii]<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup>Fei Ming, "Taoyuan", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 147. The asterisks and numerals in parentheses are mine.

<sup>68</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 135-136. The asterisks and numerals in parentheses are mine.

In this scene Xiaolin is walking alone looking at the Back-of-Cows Hills (Niubeishan 牛背山) outside Shijia Village. [i] could almost be Xiaolin's interior monologue were it not followed by the ellipsis mark (.....) and the narrator's explanation; 'Hesitating ...'. [ii] is the narrator's internal analysis of Xiaolin's visual perception. [iii] could be a perfect example of Xiaolin's interior monologue were it not mediated by a dash. The association here is not random but quite controlled.

As seen in the above examples, the use of free direct form or free association by Fei Ming can sometimes be identified, but the two do not occur simultaneously in his pastoral stories.<sup>69</sup> Fei Ming therefore does not use the stream-of-consciousness technique, but by employing (pseudo-)interior monologue, he brings out a lyric-poetic effect to his stories. Dorrit Cohn suggests a link between interior monologue and prose poems: "When lyric language becomes freed from the bonds of versification in the prose poem, the lyric speaker begins to speak in the manner of the interior monologist".<sup>70</sup> She also writes that "the interior monologue shares its fictive speaker with the dramatic monologue, its expressive prose language with the

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<sup>69</sup>William Tay states that "Fuchou" (复仇, "Revenge"), a story written in 1944 by Wang Zengqi (汪曾祺, 1920-) can be seen as a pioneering effort in the direction of the 'character-centred' or 'psychological' novel, and points out that there are three interior monologues which are still not free associative in "Fuchou". See Tay, "Wang Meng, Stream-of-consciousness and the Controversy over Modernism", p. 13-15. Now that it is clear that interior monologues were already used in Fei Ming's stories written mostly in the 1920s, Tay's mention of Wang Zengqi's story can be developed. This point will be discussed in the conclusion of this thesis.

<sup>70</sup>Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, p. 261.

prose poem".<sup>71</sup> By describing his characters' internal perception, feelings and thoughts more or less directly in free direct form and (psuedo-) interior monologue, Fei Ming conveys to the reader an illusion of the spontaneous, lively, "natural" flow of his characters' minds. This is probably what Shen Congwen meant when he expressed his admiration for Fei Ming's linguistic skill in his (=Fei Ming's) pastoral stories: "The writer [=Fei Ming] is one of those who 'can describe the spoken language using the written language' and the one whom no contemporary of his could match." (作者是 "最能用文字记述言语" 的一个人, 同一时是无可比肩并行的。) <sup>72</sup> In his review of *The Bridge*, Zhu Guanqian points out the similarity between Fei Ming and his contemporary Western stream-of-consciousness writers, Marcel Proust (1871-1922) and Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) in the way they submerge into their characters' thoughts to reveal their internal life, and abandon simple, straightforward, flat descriptions of surface actions.<sup>73</sup> However, Zhu states that Fei Ming was unfamiliar with such modern Western writers when his stories were written.<sup>74</sup> Fei

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 263. As for "dramatic monologue", Cohn explains: "The term dramatic monologue usually refers to a poem whose speaker is a character invented by the poet, not the poet himself". See *ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>72</sup>Shen Congwen, "Lun Feng Wenbing" 论冯文炳, *Shen Congwen wenji* 沈从文文集, Vol. 11 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1985), p. 98.

<sup>73</sup>Meng Shi, "Qiao", *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1 July 1937). Zhu also explains their difference: Proust and Woolf lay particular stress on revealing their characters' internal life in reaction to human affairs, while Fei Ming lays stress on the characters' internal life in reaction to natural scenery.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid. Fei Ming's nephew, Feng Jiannan states in his "Tan Fei Ming de xiaoshuo chuanguo" 谈废名的小说创作, published in *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu*, No. 4, 1985 (p. 148) that: "Fei Ming has not read the Western modernist writings" (废名没有读过西方现代派的作品). The writer, Wang Zengqi also wrote in his article, "Tan fenge" 谈风格, published in *Wenxue yuebao*, No. 6, 1984 (p. 68): "Someone told him [=Fei Ming] that his stories were very similar to Virginia Woolf's, but he said that he had not read Woolf's works. Later, he read her and felt her work and his own to be very similar indeed". (有人说他的小说很象弗·沃尔

Ming's friend, Bian Zhilin, also affirms Fei Ming's unfamiliarity with Western stream-of-consciousness stories, and suggests that Fei Ming borrowed his free associative technique from Chinese classical poetry.<sup>75</sup>

### Concise language

Fei Ming mentioned the direct influence of Chinese classical poetry on his writing method in his preface to *Selected Works of Fei Ming*:

As for the means of expression, I have apparently been influenced by Chinese traditional poetry. I wrote stories just like the Tang poets wrote *jueju* poems. A *jueju* poem consists of twenty or twenty eight characters. Although my stories were naturally much longer, I did write them in the way of writing *jueju* poems: I was not willing to waste language.

就表现的手法说，我分明地受了中国诗词的影响，我写小说同唐人写绝句一样，绝句二十个字，或二十八个字，成功一首诗，我的一篇小说，篇幅当然长得多，实是用写绝句的方法写的，不肯浪费语言。<sup>76</sup>

In conformity with this statement, the language in his pastoral stories is very concise. His sentences are usually short, as he often omits subjects, objects, prepositions, or conjunctions to achieve succinctness. For example, in "The Water-chestnuts Marsh", the story

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芙，他说他没有看过沃尔芙的作品。后来找来看看，自己也觉得果然很象。) Wang repeated the comment in his letter to me dated 13 December 1988.

<sup>75</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 6. Liang Bingjun also discusses Fei Ming's stories in comparison with Woolf's, and suggests that Fei Ming's method derives from his view of life influenced by the Daoist/Buddhist thought, and is reminiscent of Tang *jueju* poems. Liang states that the stories of Fei Ming and Woolf are "yiqu tonggong" (异曲同工, different tunes rendered with equal skill: different in approach but equally satisfactory in result). See his article, "Zhongguo xiandai shuqing xiaoshuo (xia)", *Wenxun*, No. 65 (March 1991), pp. 54-56.

<sup>76</sup>Fei Ming, "Xu". *Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan*, p. 2.

which in his own words, "indeed has the characteristics of a Tang *jueju* poem" (真有唐人绝句的特点)<sup>77</sup>, he selected the minimum number of words which were necessary to describe the country scenery:

The Water-chestnuts Marsh belonged to Taojia Village. Around the marsh was a very dense forest of stocky evergreens. If [you] walked along the dyke [you] could only see a corner of the marsh. The banks of the marsh were in the shape of a big hoop, covered in green grass and dotted with wild-flowers. There were two gaps in the belt of evergreens, one of which led to a vegetable garden. Deaf Chen's several vegetable patches were also here.<sup>78</sup>

菱荡属陶家村，周围常青树的矮林，密得很。走在坝上，望见白水的一角。荡岸，绿草散着野花，成一个圈圈。两个通口，一个连菜园。陈聋子种的几畦园也在这里。<sup>79</sup>

Shuen-fu Lin describes one of the aesthetic ideals of the *jueju* (quatrain) as "embedding a wealth of meaning in the most ordinary poetic situation and using the simplest language to describe it".<sup>80</sup> Here, in depicting the quiescent view, Fei Ming links very short, plain phrases such as "very dense" (密得很), "two gaps" (两个通口) and a "belt of evergreens" (一个连菜园) as if they were a chain of images in perceiving them. He omits the subjects of the verbs 'zou' (走, walk) and 'wangjian' (望见, see) as well as prepositions such as 'zai' (在, at)

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>This translation is based on Christopher Smith's in *Chinese Literature*, Spring 1990, p. 115. "You" is placed in parentheses in my translation because in English the subject is necessary to form a sentence while in the Chinese text, it is omitted to convey a sense of universality.

<sup>79</sup>Fei Ming, "Lingdang", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 71. Apart from in the 1988 edition of the story collected in *Fei Ming xuanji*, the punctuation of the second sentence in the passage quoted here is "走在坝上，望见白水的一角。" In other words, only in *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 156, "走在坝上。望见白水的一角。"

<sup>80</sup>Shuen-fu Lin, "The Nature of the Quatrain from the Late Han to the High T'ang", *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to the T'ang*, ed. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 325.

in front of 'dang'an' (荡岸, the banks of the marsh). The omission of a verb's subject is very common in Chinese traditional poetry, as Fei Ming himself has pointed out.<sup>81</sup> This frequent omission of the subject has the effect of enhancing the sense of timelessness and universality.<sup>82</sup> François Cheng writes on the absence of personal pronouns in Chinese poetry: "In erasing itself, or rather in choosing only to imply its presence, the subject interiorizes the exterior elements".<sup>83</sup> Applying this, Fei Ming suppresses the opposition between the subjective and objective worlds and invites the reader to share the narrator's perception of Taojia Village.

Another example of Fei Ming's omission of a subject, a prepositional phrase and a conjunction can be seen in the "Pagoda" ("Ta" 塔) chapter of *The Bridge*. Fei Ming describes a scene in which the imaginative Xiaolin looks at Xizhu's picture: "In looking at [it] suddenly, it was almost as if his imagination was too active, [and] [in his mind] the umbrella had propped up all his ideas for him, so [he] was temporarily unable to give his opinion." (骤看时, 恐怕还是他自己的意思太多, 一把伞都替他撑起来了, 所以一时失批评。)<sup>84</sup> Here, Fei Ming misses out the object, 'ta' (它, it) after 'kan' (看, look), and a conjunction between 'kongpa haishi ta ziji de yisi tai duo' (恐怕还是他自己的意思太多; it was almost as if his imagination was too active) and

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<sup>81</sup>Fei Ming wrote: "In Chinese poetry, subjects are simply not used." (中国诗里简直不用主词) in "Xinshi yinggai shi ziyoushi" 新诗应该是自由诗, collected in *Tan xinshi* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1984), p. 26.

<sup>82</sup>James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1966, fourth impression, 1974), p. 40.

<sup>83</sup>François Cheng, *Chinese Poetic Writing*, trans. Donald A. Riggs and Jerome P. Seaton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 24.

<sup>84</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 351. Explanatory words have been added, in parentheses, in my translation, since they are necessary to form an understandable English sentence.

'*yi ba san dou ti ta chengqilai le*' (一把伞都替他撑起来了; the umbrella had propped up all his ideas for him). Furthermore, he omits a prepositional phrase, which might indicate where Xiaolin's image of the umbrella occurs. He also does not mention the subject, '*ta*' (他, he) between '*suoyi*' (所以, so) and '*yishi*' (一时, temporarily). By using minimal syntax, Fei Ming enhances the sentence's imagistic function.

Similarly, in "The Setting Sun" chapter of *The Bridge*, Fei Ming's economical but vivid use of language can also be seen. For instance:

The children cheered. Mute Third Uncle pulled the rope of the cow. The cow walked step by step. In the air swayed the 'flowers' of the bamboo spray.  
孩子们喝采, 三哑牵牛绳, 牛一脚一脚的蹒, 空中摇曳着竹枝花。<sup>85</sup>

The passage describes a scene in which Xiaolin sits on the back of a cow. Here, Fei Ming does not use any conjunctions at all. The poetic word '*zhuzhihua*' (竹枝花, 'flowers' of the bamboo spray) signifies many red flowers stuck to the green branches of a bamboo rod which Mute Third Uncle made and gave to Xiaolin earlier in the same chapter. In Chinese poetry especially, words enjoy a high degree of freedom and the same word can be used as a noun, verb, adjective, and so on, according to the context.<sup>86</sup> Fei Ming applies this by inventing his own words in his stories and thus achieving a considerable degree of conciseness of language. Here, he creates a new compound; '*zhuzhihua*' by using '*zhuzhi*' (bamboo spray) as an adjective to modify '*hua*' (flowers). In other words, in his pastoral

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<sup>85</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 27.

<sup>86</sup>James Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, pp. 45-46.

stories, Fei Ming effectively uses words of his own creation which are compact but loaded with meaning, taking advantage of the syntactic fluidity of the Chinese language.

Similarly, in *The Bridge's* "On the Way" chapter, he makes up the phrase '*cao yi wei jing*' (草意微惊), which expresses the situation extremely concisely and yet without losing any meaning: "A snake appeared in the grass and the child grabbed its tail. Surprised by the small, long, strange-coloured thing, the two girls' appreciation of the meadow was shaken slightly." (蛇出乎草——孩子捏了蛇尾巴。小小的长条异色的东西，两位姑娘的草意微惊。) <sup>87</sup> Here, in '*cao yi wei jing*', Fei Ming uses the noun, '*cao*' (草, 'grass') as an adjective which modifies the noun, '*yi*' (意, 'idea'), and makes the combination of the first two characters, '*cao yi*' (literally, 'grassy idea': 'feeling for the grass') into the subject of the phrase. The combination of the latter two characters, '*wei jing*' works as the predicate, meaning 'slightly' ('*wei*' 微: adverb) 'surprised' ('*jing*' 惊: verb). In this way, by putting together odd characters imaginatively, Fei Ming creates an original phrase with a meaning quite complex for its length. Such usage of language by Fei Ming is indeed reminiscent of that in classical Chinese poetry. Yu-kung Kao and Tsu-lin Mei write that "the language of [Tang] poetry is characterized by an extreme looseness in syntax; grammatical devices for accumulating details or specifying relations are either not in the Chinese language in the first place, or

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<sup>87</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 238. The literal meaning of the last sentence is "The small, long, strange-coloured thing was a slight surprise for the two girls' feeling for the grass." This example is also mentioned in the article, "Qiao" 桥 by Guan Ying 灌婴, published in *Xinyue yuekan* 新月月刊, Vol. 4, No. 5 (1 November 1932).

were left behind in the process of transforming ordinary language into an instrument of poetry".<sup>88</sup> Fei Ming leaves behind explanatory "details" "in the process of transforming ordinary language into an instrument of poetry", and skilfully adds subtle nuances to his passage.

Fei Ming also exercises his own special way of employing poetic diction by exploiting the ideographic nature of Chinese characters.<sup>89</sup> For example, in "The Peach Orchard", he personifies the moon and describes it as Wang Laoda's guest using the word 'shuan' (闩, fasten with a bolt) skilfully: "Wang Laoda bolted the door and locked the moon out." (王老大一门闩把月亮都闩出去了。)<sup>90</sup> The character, 'shuan' is an ideogram of '一' (seemingly a bolt) slid across '门' (a gate) (both these characters appear before the word 'shuan'), which conveys a visual image in the reader's mind of a bolt sliding across.

Again, in "The Setting Sun" chapter of *The Bridge*, more of Fei Ming's use of poetic language can be found:

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<sup>88</sup>Yu-kung Kao and Tsu-lin Mei, "Syntax, Diction, and Imagery in T'ang Poetry", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 31 (1971), p. 71.

<sup>89</sup>It is interesting to note that Western modernist writers such as T. E. Hulme (1883-1917), Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908) and Ezra Pound (1885-1972) also found a source of inspiration for their poetic language in Chinese and Japanese poetry and art. Influenced by Chinese flexible syntactic models, the brevity and concision of *haiku*, and the unusual juxtapositions of objects in Japanese prints, they attempted to dislocate syntax and juxtapose a series of images in their writings, in order to present the 'reality' which is, in their view, multiple and in flux, rather than singular and linear. For more details, see Alison Bailey, "Breaking the Shell: The Crisis of Poetic Language and the East Asian Influence" (unpublished paper, 1986).

<sup>90</sup>Fei Ming, "Taoyuan", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 149. Bian Zhilin and Yang Yi also point out his poetic diction in this example in their articles, "Xu" in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 9 and "Fei Ming xiaoshuo de tianyuan fengwei", p. 31 respectively. Also in his letter to me dated 4 April 1993, He Liwei (何立伟, 1954-), a fiction writer who has been active since the early 1980s, also points out the beauty of this sentence.

He got down from the cow, and ran straight on to the dyke, and the familiar walled city opened out before his eyes so unusually fresh, it was almost as though he had never seen it before. The grove was filled with a golden light, in no way like the drooping ears and doziness the last time he had come. The cicadas were even noisier and he wondered if those crying out were the leaves on the trees. The sun was setting, hanging on the tops of the city wall, the ancestral hall, the temple, the southern gate, the northern gate, the highest balcony of the pawn shop, every one of these he could see clearly.

下得牛来，他一跑跑到坝上去了，平素习见得几乎没有看见的城圈儿，展在眼前异样的新鲜。树林满被金光，不比来时像是垂着耳朵打瞌睡，蝉也更叫得热闹，疑心那叫的就是树叶儿。一轮落日，挂在城头，祠堂，庙，南门，北门，最高的典当铺的凉亭，一一看得清楚。<sup>91</sup>

In the Chinese original text, the subjects of the verbs 'lai' (来, came), 'yixin' (疑心, wondered), and 'kan' (看, see) at the end are omitted. Also, in the last sentence, Fei Ming arranged a series of nouns, 'citang' (祠堂, ancestral hall), 'miao' (庙, temple), 'nanmen' (南门, southern gate), 'beimen' (北门, northern gate) and 'liangting' (最高的典当铺的凉亭, the highest balcony of the pawn shop) to describe the scenery without inserting a verb until the very end. The juxtaposition of a series of nouns, shed of all connecting links such as conjunction, verbs and particles is common in traditional Chinese poetry.<sup>92</sup> It

<sup>91</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 30-31.

<sup>92</sup>James Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, p. 41. It is possible that Fei Ming had been inclined to be attracted to the juxtaposition of nouns in traditional Chinese poetry since his teens. As mentioned in Chapter One (pp. 23-24) of this thesis, Fei Ming liked Ma Zhiyuan's "Autumn Thoughts" when he was a student at Hubei First Normal School. Satō Tamotsu states that one of the intriguing points in this *sanqu* lies in the juxtaposition of nouns in the first three lines, which, as in *haiku* poetry, conveys to the reader abundant suggestive (hidden) meanings between the images created by the nouns. See Satō Tamotsu, *Kanshi no imēji* (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 1992), p. 353. Ma Zhiyuan's "Autumn Thoughts" goes:

Withered vines, old trees, crows in dusk  
A little bridge, flowing water, houses  
An old road, westerly wind, a thin horse  
The evening sun is setting in the west

would seem that James Liu's comment on the aesthetic effect of the juxtaposition of nouns in traditional Chinese poetry can suitably be applied to Fei Ming's case: "Here, the poet unfolds a scene like a scroll of Chinese painting, and our attention moves from one object to the next, yet the absence of verbs creates a sense of stillness in movement, as if these objects had been arrested in time and frozen in an eternal prose ..."93

Juxtaposition of nouns can also be found in the "Poem" ("Shi" 诗)

Chapter of *The Bridge*:

These words, he heard of course, but he was terribly curious about Xizhu's having changed her clothes!

It was an unlined garment, in moon-white colour, and also as good-looking as the previous one. Good-looking was not at all surprising, but just simply unexpected! His mind immediately began to levitate again to that place where he looked up and down carefully alone this morning; the bamboo flute on the wall, the flower in the vase, the green shades of the palm trees -- How could there be such a changing of clothes? .....

这话他当然是听了，但稀奇得利害，细竹换了衣裳！

单衣，月白之色，又是一样的好看。好看不足奇，只是太出乎不意！立时又神游起来了，今天上午一个人仔细端详了的那个地方，壁上的箫，瓶子里的花，棕榈的绿荫——怎么会有这么一更衣呢？.....94

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The heartbroken person is at the remotest corner of the earth.

枯藤老树昏鸦  
小桥流水人家  
古道西风瘦马  
夕阳西下  
断肠人在天涯

<sup>93</sup>James Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, p. 42. Edward Gunn points out the borrowing of juxtaposition techniques from Chinese traditional poetry by Chinese novels of the 1900s and 1910s: "The appearance of disjunction in prose as an extension of a Chinese tradition in poetry may be distinguished in early-twentieth-century Chinese fiction by juxtaposition of emotive passages with natural scenic description, after the manner of the poetic invention of qing 情 and jing 景." See Edward Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese -- Style and Innovation in Twentieth-Century Chinese Prose* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 10.

<sup>94</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 274.

This passage describes the reaction of Xiaolin who saw Xizhu in a different garment after she came back from the Red Flower Mountain. Adolescent Xiaolin, who was attracted by Xizhu, had been curious about her (and 'mystified' by the opposite sex in general) and looked around her room while she was away. In her room, triggered by the sight of (traditionally) feminine objects such as a mirror and a flower, a number of associated images, including that of an ancient legendary celestial beauty (probably Chang'e), had surged in his active mind. In Xiaolin's 'levitation' part of this passage, Fei Ming juxtaposes the objects in Xizhu's room, that is, "the bamboo flute on the wall, the flower in the vase, the green shades of the palm trees", with no linkage from one to the next. Fei Ming conveys to the reader a set of fragmented images, vivid in its individual components, but deficient in overall integration. As a result, the reader tends to sense hidden suggestive meanings<sup>95</sup> between images created by these noun phrases. Fei Ming's use of such understatement, often an objective scene or an image, is somewhat reminiscent of the technique Stephen Owen calls, "open closure" in traditional Chinese quatrains. In describing the technique, Owen writes: "... the emotional response was transferred from the poet to the reader by leaving the closure open, by using a scene or image to generate a complex mood or emotion, like the ancient 'stimulus', [xing]. The

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<sup>95</sup>One interpretation of the hidden meaning between these noun phrases would be 'otherworldly, a-sexual, conceptual, feminine beauty'. It contrasts with the idea of physical beauty or sexuality which Xizhu's 'changing clothes' could indirectly suggest. (Later in the same chapter, Fei Ming describes a word with a slight sexual connotation, "a girl's plastron" (少女之胸襟). However, the narrator immediately adds in a self-conscious way: "Must write the word 'breasts', but with such a word he says he isn't satisfied". (写出来应该是一个"乳"字, 这么一字他说不称意。) See *ibid.*, pp. 276-278.

reader is invited to set the closing image in relation to the scene and mood already established".<sup>96</sup> The conciseness of Fei Ming's language conveys to the reader an indeterminacy of meaning, or a lingering 'after-image'. This aspect of his stories also leads to their demand for the active role of the reader, which will be discussed below in this chapter.

### The use of quotations

Another stylistic characteristic of Fei Ming's pastoral stories, especially the novel, *The Bridge*, is the frequent use of quotations, which also adds to the effect of concision in his language and engages the reader's active attention. About allusions, Fei Ming wrote in Chapter Seven of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane":

When I read Shakespeare or Yu Xin, I recognize only the poet and find the poet's self expression everywhere. Shakespeare expresses himself through the story and characters, the Chinese poet by rhetoric and allusions. One expresses himself in life, the other in artistic conception. Whether expressing oneself in life or in artistic conception, one can say that both use 'allusions', for life is not real life and the artistic conception is not directly in front of you. What is expressed is simply the poet's imagination.

我读莎士比亚，读庾子山，只认得一个诗人，处处是这个诗人自己表现，不过莎士比亚是以故事人物来表现自己，中国诗人则以辞藻典故来表现自己，一个表现于生活，一个表现于意境。表现生活也好，表现意境也好，都可以说是用典故，因为生活不是现实生活，意境不是当前意境，都是诗人的想像。<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of the Early T'ang* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 133.

<sup>97</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou, Di qi zhang, Moxuyou xiansheng jiao guoyu" 莫须有先生坐飞机以后，第七章 莫须有先生教国语, *Fei Ming xuanji*, pp. 539-540.

From this passage, it can be gathered that Fei Ming linked the use of allusion with the expression of the artistic conception, and with the expression of the poet's own imagination.

His allusions are usually straight quotations of one or two lines from traditional Chinese literature.<sup>98</sup> In *The Bridge*, there are 40 quotations whose sources were successfully identified.<sup>99</sup> As shown in the chart in page 224, 39 of them are drawn from Chinese sources (8 classics<sup>100</sup>, 24 poetry<sup>101</sup>, 1 prose<sup>102</sup>, 5 fiction<sup>103</sup>, and 1 folk

<sup>98</sup>A rare example of Fei Ming's indirect allusion can be found in the "Tablet" chapter of *The Bridge*. Fei Ming describes the scenery alluding to the phrase, "Looking up at a high mountain" (高山仰止) in "Xiaoya, chexia" 小雅, 车辇, of *The Book of Songs*: "In short, the white road in the green mountain made him stop to look up." (总之青山之上一条白道, 要他仰止了。) See Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 138.

<sup>99</sup>There are 11 more whose sources could not be traced. 6 of them seem to be drawn from traditional Chinese poetry (5 out of the 6 are probably from Tang poetry), and 1 from English literature (Fei Ming indicates that it was cited from a work by an "English writer").

<sup>100</sup>2 from *The Book of Songs* ("Xiaoya, chexia": see footnote 97 above, and "Daya, hanlu" 大雅, 旱麓), 3 from *The Analects* ("Xue er pian" 学而篇, "Gongzhichang pian" 公冶长篇, and "Yang Huo pian" 阳货篇), 1 from *The Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong)* 中庸: "Di ershi liu zhang" 第二十六章), 1 from *Zhuangzi* ("Xiaoyaoyou pian" 逍遥游篇), and 1 from *The Book of Mencius (Mengzi)* 孟子: "Gaozi xia" 告子下).

<sup>101</sup>*The Songs of Chu (Chuci)* 楚辞 by Qu Yuan (屈原, 340-278 B.C.), "Up in the Lakeside Tower" ("Deng chishang lou" 登池上楼) by Xie Lingyun (谢灵运, 385-433), "Written at Imperial Command to Harmonize with His Majesty's Poem, 'To My Wife'" ("Fenghe shi neiren" 奉和示内人) by Yu Xin (庾信, 513-581), one of the "Nineteen Ancient Poems" (*gushi shijiu shou* 古诗十九首) collected in *Wenxuan* 文选, "A Poem of Liangzhou" ("Liangzhou ci" 凉州词) by Wang Han (王翰, 687-726), "Climbing Lanshan in Autumn; To Zhang the Fifth" ("Qiu deng Lanshan ji Zhang Wu" 秋登兰山寄张五) and "Springtime Sleep" ("Chunxiao" 春晓) (twice) by Meng Haoran (孟浩然, 689-740), "Recent Clearing: An Evening View" ("Xinqing wanwang" 新晴晚望), "Playfully Presented to Zhang Yin the Fifth's Brother" ("Xi zeng Zhang Wu di Yin sanshou" 戏赠张五弟諲三首), No. 1, "Grained Apricot Lodge" ("Wenxingguan" 文杏馆) and "Pear Blossoms at Zuoye" ("Zuoye lihua" 左掖梨花) by Wang Wei (王维, 701-761), "Imitating the Ancients, Twelve Poems", No. 8 ("Nigu shi'er shou", qi ba 拟古十二首, 其八) by Li Bai (李白, 701-762), "Delighted at Rain on a Spring Night" ("Chunye xiyu" 春夜喜雨) by Du Fu (杜甫, 712-770), "Seeing Off Judge Li Who Leaves for the Runzhou Field Headquarters" ("Song Li panguan zhi Runzhou xingying" 送李判官之润州行营) by Liu Changqing (刘长卿, ?-785), "A Poem to the Magnolias of the House of Linghu" ("Ti Linghu jia mulan shi" 题令狐家木兰诗) by Bai Juyi (白居易, 772-816), "Regret on Completion of Her Toilette" ("Hen Zhuangcheng" 恨妆成) by Yuan Zhen (元稹, 779-831), "Qingming" (清明) by Du Mu (杜牧, 803-852), "Songs of the Water Clock at Night"

saying<sup>104</sup>) and 1 from an English source (Shakespeare). 60 % of the quotations are drawn from traditional Chinese poetry.<sup>105</sup> As for the chronological distribution, the Spring and Autumn to the Warring States (770 B.C.-221 B.C.): 9 (23%), the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-581): 3 (8%), the Tang Dynasty (618-907): 18 (45%), the Five Dynasties (907-960): 1 (3%), the Song Dynasty (960-1279): 2 (5%), the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644): 4 (including 1 Shakespeare, 10%), the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911): 1 (3%) and the Republic (1912-1949): 2 (including 1 Southern Chinese local folk saying, 5%). The largest number of the quotations are from Tang poems, and there are 18 of them, which amounts to 45%.<sup>106</sup> Among these 18 Tang poems, 15 are *shi* and 3 are *ci*: periodically, 10 are from the High Tang, 3 from the Middle Tang, and 5 from the Late Tang. The top three Tang poets who are most often quoted are Wang Wei (4 *shi*), Wen Tingyun (3 *ci*), and Meng Haoran (2 *shi*). Other common sources are *The Analects* (3), *The Book of Songs* (2) and *The Water Margin* (2).

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("Geng lou zi" 更漏子), "Pu sa man", No. 1 (Pu sa man qi yi 菩萨蛮, 其一), and "He du shen" qi er (河浹神, 其二) by Wen Tingyun (温庭筠, 812-866), "Peonies" ("Mudan" 牡丹) by Li Shangyin (李商隐, 813-858), "Shan hua zi" (山花子) by Li Jing (李璟, 916-961), and "Overnight Rain" ("Suyu" 宿雨) by Wang Anshi (王安石, 1021-1089).

<sup>102</sup>"A Note on 'Kuai zai' Pavilion in Huangzhou" ("Huangzhou kuai zai ting ji" 黄州快哉亭记) by Su Shi (苏轼, 1037-1101). Su Shi plays on the term "kuai" (快, happy, quick, etc.) throughout this essay.

<sup>103</sup>1 refers to *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo shi yanyi* 三国演义), 2 to *The Water Margin*, 1 to *The Dream of Red Mansions* (*Hongloumeng* 红楼梦), and 1 to Fei Ming's own short story, "Fireworks -- A Cowherd Child" ("Huapao -- fangniu de haizi" 花炮 -- 放牛的孩子).

<sup>104</sup>See footnote 127, below in this chapter.

<sup>105</sup>It excludes quotations from *The Book of Songs* which is categorized here as one of the "classics". On the basis of the assumption about the quotations with unknown sources mentioned in footnote 99, the figure would be 58%.

<sup>106</sup>Again, on the basis of the assumed provenance of the unknown quotations, the figures would be 23 and 45%.

### Quotations in *The Bridge*

	Classics	<i>Shi</i> poetry	<i>Ci</i> poetry	Other poetry	Prose	Fiction	Sayings	Others	Total
Spring & Autumn -- Warring States (770 B.C.-221 B.C.)	2- <i>The Book of Songs</i> 3- <i>The Analects</i> 1- <i>The Doctrine of the Mean</i> 1 - <i>Zhuangzi</i> 1- <i>The Book of Mencius</i>			1- <i>The Songs of Chu</i>					9 (23%)
Northern & Southern Dynasties (420-581)		1-Xie Lingyun 1-Yu Xin 1 - <i>Wenxuan</i>							3 (8%)
Tang (618-907)		1-Wang Han 3-Meng Haoran 4-Wang Wei 1-Li Bai 1-Du Fu 1-Liu Changqing 1-Bai Juyi 1-Yuan Zhen 1-Du Mu 1-Li Shangyin	3-Wen Tingyun						18 (45%)
Five Dynasties (907-960)			1-Li Jing						1 (3%)
Song (960-1279)		1-Wang Anshi			1-Su Shi				2 (5%)
Ming (1368-1644)						1- <i>The Romance of the Three Kingdoms</i> 2- <i>The Water Margin</i>		1 - Shakespeare	4 (10%)
Qing (1644-1911)						1- <i>The Dream of Red Mansions</i>			1 (3%)
Republic (1912-1949)						1 - "Fireworks" by Feng Wenbing	1-"The gentleman passing by ..."		2 (5%)
Total	8 (20%)	19 (48%)	4 (10%)	1 (3%)	1(3%)	5 (13%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	40

He uses these quotations in four different ways. The most common usage is descriptive: Fei Ming borrows ready-made expressions to describe either scenes in his novel or his characters' thoughts or personalities. There are 23 (58%) cases of this type.<sup>107</sup> For this usage, lines from traditional Chinese poetry (19 out of 24), especially Tang poems (14), are used most often. The quotations from such Tang *jueju* poems as "Springtime Sleep" by Meng Haoran, "Grained Apricot Lodge" by Wang Wei and "Qingming" by Du Mu, which have already been shown in the previous chapter<sup>108</sup>, belong to this type. Another example can be seen in the "Tablet" Chapter:

So the west was a road to the left, and as he went down along it gradually, even the sun did not seem to be much higher than he. He seemed as if he had swallowed this vast universe at a glance, with no hesitation at all. -- Indeed, he swallowed it; if in future he would read many books, he could pour out through the mouth of the ancients: This was just like the world of Tang poetry, "White waters gleam beyond the fields", "The trees at sky's edge are like shepherd's-purse".<sup>109</sup>

那么西方是路左，一层一层的低下去，连太阳也不见得比他高几多。他彷彿是一眼把这一块大天地吞进去了，一点也不留连，——真的，吞进去了，将来多读几句书会在古人口中吐出，这正是一些唐诗的境界，『白水明田外』，『天边树若荠』。<sup>110</sup>

Here, "White waters gleam beyond the fields" (白水明田外) is from Wang Wei's poem "Recent Clearing after Rain: An Evening View" ("Xinqing wanwang" 新晴晚望) and "The trees at sky's edge are like

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<sup>107</sup>If quotations with unknown sources are added, the figures would be 31 cases and 61 %.

<sup>108</sup>See Chapter Four, pp. 159-161 of this thesis.

<sup>109</sup>The translation of the former line in quotation marks is taken from *The Poetry of Wang Wei* by Pauline Yu, p. 174 and the latter line in quotation marks is taken from *Meng Hao-jan* by Paul W. Kroll (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), p. 101.

<sup>110</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 134-135.

shepherd's-purse" (天边树若齐) is from Meng Haoran's poem, "Climbing Lanshan in autumn; To Zhang the Fifth" ("Qiu deng Lanshan ji Zhang Wu" 秋登兰山寄张五). By quoting these poems by the Tang masters, Fei Ming not only achieves economy of language in this passage but also enhances its imagistic quality. The quotations remind the reader of the serene atmosphere of the original poems and make him or her incorporate the images into the passage. An example of descriptive quotation which indicates the feeling and personality of the characters can be found in the chapter, "Lantern": Qinzi's anxiety about her fiancé Xiaolin's loyalty to her is suggested euphemistically in the quotation of the line "creeping into the night with the wind" (随风潜入夜) from Du Fu's *lüshi*, "Delighted at Rain on a Spring Night" ("Chunye xiyu" 春夜喜雨): "The light of the lantern was no help to the grandmother's love and the girl's heart could not ignite by itself -- it was indeed 'creeping into the night with the wind.'" (灯光无助于祖母之爱，少女的心又不能自己燃起来——真是『随风潜入夜』。) <sup>111</sup> Just before this sentence, Qinzi has been talking with her grandmather indoors under the light of a lantern on a spring night, and Xiaolin and Xizhu have not yet returned. By this sentence, Fei Ming seems to imply that her grandmother's affection towards her, which was shown under the light, could not temper Qinzi's anxiety. She could not burn with her love for Xiaolin, nor glow with happiness. Her anxiety was indeed, like the drizzle in Du Fu's poem,

<sup>111</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 214. Another example of using an allusion to express the character's state of mind can be found in the "Bamboo Flute" chapter of *The Bridge* (p. 268). Fei Ming quotes lines from *Shijing*, "Daya, hanlu": "The poem goes: 'The kite flies up to Heaven; The fish leaps in its pool.' This was probably the mental state when Xiaolin stepped over the threshold." (诗云『鸢飞戾天，鱼跃于渊。』此盖是小林踏进这个门坎的境界。)

"creeping into the night with the wind". Also, in the "Sandy Shore" chapter, Qinzi's personality is described with a quotation from *The Analects*: "Qinzi was a really lovable girl and everyone liked her. Xiaolin often said that she 'brought peace to the old and cherished the young', which was a wholehearted comment although said in a joking way." (琴子真是一个可爱的姑娘，什么人也喜欢她。小林常说她『老者安之，少者怀之，』虽是笑话，却是真心的评语。) <sup>112</sup> Other examples of the descriptive kind of quotations used to represent the atmosphere of the scenes, the situations or to indicate the characters' feelings, imagination, or personality in the novel can be found in the chapters, "Under the Pine Tree" <sup>113</sup>, "Lamp" ("Deng" 灯) <sup>114</sup>, "Tablet" <sup>115</sup>, "Diary" ("Riji" 日记) <sup>116</sup>, "Willows" <sup>117</sup>, "On the Way" <sup>118</sup>, "Tea Shop" ("Chapu" 茶

<sup>112</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 178. The quotation is from *The Analects*, Book V (Gongye Chang pian 公冶长篇), 26.

<sup>113</sup>The scenery of the graveyard, 'Under the Pine Tree', is described: "In Li Bai's two lines, 'A cicada chirrups on a green pine, how does it know that this tree is old?'" (借了李白的两句：蟋蟀啼青松，安见此树老)。Here, the source of the lines is "Imitating the Ancients", No. 8 ("Nigu shi'er shou, qi ba"). Fei Ming again suggestively contrasts mortality against the longevity of nature. See Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 92.

<sup>114</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 159: A line, "Before your steps even tigers were good-willed" (阶前虎心善) is quoted from Wang Wei's poem, "Xi zeng Zhang Wu di Yin sanshou", No. 1. Fei Ming uses this line adroitly to sum up the atmosphere of an entire scene.

<sup>115</sup>See footnote 98, above in this chapter. Also the chapter 77 of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is referred to by Xiaolin who suddenly thought of it. See *Qiao*, p. 144.

<sup>116</sup>In her conversation with Xizhu, Qinzi quotes the line, "On the cold wall is a painted flower in blossom." (『寒壁画花开。』) from Yu Xin's poem, "Fenghe shi neiren". See Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 165. This line seems to summarize the scene described in the previous chapter, "Deng" (p. 158) in which Qinzi and Xizhu saw a picture of a red camellia on a wall.

<sup>117</sup>Xiaolin humourously describes the view of Xizhu's running by saying: "The green green grass sends off the horse's hoof." (『草色青青送马蹄。』) It is a quotation of the line from Liu Changqing's poem, "Song Li panguan zhi Runzhou xingying". See Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 196.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 232: The line, "Light rouge strokes the lovely face" (轻红拂花脸) from "Hen Zhuangcheng" by Yuan Zhen, and ibid., p. 236: the line, "Red flowers vie

铺)<sup>119</sup>, "Courtyard" ("Tianjing" 天井)<sup>120</sup>, "Pear Blossoms are White" ("Lihuabai" 梨花白)<sup>121</sup>, "Tree"<sup>122</sup>, and "Pagoda" ("Ta" 塔).<sup>123</sup> In these chapters, Li Bai, Wang Wei, *The Book of Songs* and *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Yu Xin, Liu Changqing, Yuan Zhen and Wang Anshi, Xie Lingyun and Bai Juyi, Wen Tingyun, one of the "Nineteen Ancient Poems", and Li Jing respectively are quoted.

The second usage is that of introducing general, common knowledge to trigger the point he is going to make next. There are 9 cases of this (23% of the quotations).<sup>124</sup> For instance, in the "Bridge" ("Qiao" 桥) chapter of *The Bridge*, Xiaolin makes his own philosophical poem about human life using the line, "Don't laugh at us when we're drunk and lying on desert battlefields." (醉卧沙场君莫笑) from Wang Han's (王翰, 687-726?) *jueju* poem, "A Poem of Liangzhou" ("Liangzhou ci" 凉州词): "Don't laugh at us when drunk and lying on desert battlefields. Where is life comparable to being in one's cups?"

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to bloom on newly warmed branches" (红争暖树归) from "Suyu" by Wang Anshi. In both cases the quotations appear in spring scenes.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., p. 246: The line, "By the pond spring grass is growing" (池塘生春草) from "Deng chishang lou" by Xie Lingyun. Also, *ibid.*, p. 251: the lines, "From now on often in spring dreams, Must add a magnolia tree" (从此时时春梦里, 应添一树女郎花) from "Ti Linghu jia mulan shi" by Bai Juyi. Again, these lines add an extra poetic dimension to a young women's spring outing.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., p. 285: The line, "The hair on the temples like black clouds is about to cross over snow-white fragrant cheeks" (鬓云欲度香腮雪) from "Pu sa man" by Wen Tingyun is quoted to describe Qinzi's beauty.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 335: The lines, "An oriole hasn't had enough of playing around, With laden bill, (it) enters Weiyang Palace" (黄莺弄不足, 含入未央宫) from "Zuoye lihua" by Wang Wei are quoted. Xiaolin remembers these lines, triggered by the sight of Xizhu's mouth and her mentioning of a peach blossom twig.

<sup>122</sup>See pp. 251-252, below in this chapter.

<sup>123</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 353: Xiaolin cites a line, "In drizzle, I am back from my dream of the far-off frontier" (细雨梦回鸡塞远) from Li Jing's *ci* poem to express his associations drawn from his conversation with Xizhu about rain.

<sup>124</sup>If those with unknown sources are added, the figures would be 11 cases and 22%.

(醉卧沙场君莫笑，人生何处似尊前?)<sup>125</sup> In Wang's poem, which is about the sadness of a soldier who could die anytime, the line is followed by "Since time immemorial, how many have returned from going on an expedition?" (古来征战几人回?) Fei Ming alters the latter part to fit into the situation in his novel which is not about a battle, and expresses his own pessimistic view of life and aesthetic view of death. Similarly, the narrator begins the "Lamp" chapter, quoting the phrase; "The summer cicada knows nothing of spring and autumn" (蟋蟀不知春秋) from the *Zhuangzi's* "Free and Easy Wandering" ("Xiaoyaoyou pian" 逍遥游篇): "It was spring when Xiaolin came back. 'The summer cicada knows nothing of spring and autumn', the nuance of spring may be of no use to them: this apart, who wouldn't say that sight and sound of spring are good?" (小林的归来，正当春天。蟋蟀不知春秋，春天对于他们或者没有用处，除此以外谁不说春光好呢?)<sup>126</sup> Here, Fei Ming uses *Zhuangzi's* well-known phrase to introduce the topic of spring before going on to emphasize the pleasantness of that season. Again, in the "Tea Shop" chapter of *The Bridge*, Fei Ming also triggers off a folk atmosphere with the Southern Chinese local superstitious expression: "The gentleman passing by reads this aloud once. Sleep until waking up in the bright daylight" (过路君子念一遍一夜睡到大天光).<sup>127</sup> Other examples of this kind can be found in the

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<sup>125</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 305.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., p. 249. Bian Zhilin, who is also from the South (from Jiangsu province), explained the expression: In the old days, there was a time when it was very common for babies to cry at night, as they had caught some kind of illness. Probably because of a superstition or the lack of money to ask for a doctor, people in villages and small towns often stuck a sheet of paper on the wall at places where people passed by. On the sheet, they wrote the four lines; 'The God of Heaven, the God of the Earth / There's a baby boy who cries at night in my house / The gentleman passing by reads this aloud once / Sleep

chapters, "Dusk"<sup>128</sup>, "Lantern"<sup>129</sup>, "Qingming"<sup>130</sup>, "Bamboo Flute"<sup>131</sup>, "Courtyard"<sup>132</sup>, "Maple" ("Fengshu" 枫树)<sup>133</sup> and "Pear Blossoms are White"<sup>134</sup>, in which *The Dream of Red Mansions*, *The Water Margin*, lines from *The Songs of Chu*, Wen Tingyun's poem and *The Analects* are mentioned.

The third kind of usage is to bring out a sense of humour to the novel and to draw empathy from his readers. There are 4 cases of this (10%).<sup>135</sup> Fei Ming makes his school children quote from Chinese

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until waking up in the bright daylight." (天皇皇地皇皇 / 我家有个夜啼郎 / 过路君人念一遍 / 一觉睡到大天亮) See Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 12.

<sup>128</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 202: This is a reference to an episode in Chapter 7 of *The Water Margin* where Lu Zhishen (= Tattooed Monk 花和尚) uproots a willow tree. In this case it is stated that even the Tattooed Monk could not uproot a particular willow tree.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., p. 212: After listening to Qinzi's complaint about the lack of flowers for decoration in winter, Grandma Shi says, quoting from *The Analects*, Book IX, 28: "Only when the cold season comes is the point brought home that the pine and the cypress are the last to lose their leaves" (『岁寒然后知松柏之凋』). The translation of the line is by D. C. Lau in *The Analects* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, first published 1979, rpt. 1987), p. 100. Here, Fei Ming is affirming the truth in Qinzi's words by Grandma Shi's quotation.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., p. 222: Chapter 22 of *The Dream of Red Mansions* is alluded to.

<sup>131</sup>The narrator describes: "In such a situation in flew a goose -- obviously a goose from the poem, 'The fortress geese start in fear, And crows rise from the wall!'" (这个气候之下飞来一只雁, --分明是『惊塞雁起城乌』的那一个雁!). See Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 270. The line, "The fortress geese start in fear, And crows rise from the wall" (惊塞雁, 起城乌) is a quotation from Wen Tingyun's *ci* poem, "Geng louzi". This translation is my amended version of that of Lois Fusek in her *Among the Flowers -- The Hua-chien chi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 41.

<sup>132</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 283: a line from *The Analects*, Book XVII (Yang Huo pian), 19, "What does Heaven ever say?" (天何言哉?) is cited as a playful example of a question which one might ask oneself.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., p. 322: Xiaolin refers to the lines from "The Fisherman" ("Yu fu" 渔父) in *The Songs of Chu*: "When the Cang-lang's waters are clear, / I can wash my hat-strings in them; / When the Cang-lang's waters are muddy, / I can wash my feet in them" (沧浪之水清兮, 可以濯吾纓, 沧浪之水浊兮, 可以濯吾足) to introduce the topic of his affection for flowing water. The translation of these lines is taken from *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems By Qu Yuan and Other Poets*, trans. David Hawkes (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1985), p. 207.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., p. 335: Lu Zhishen 鲁智深 in *The Water Margin* is mentioned.

<sup>135</sup>If those with unknown sources are added, the figures would be 6 and 12%.

classics which are often the textbooks from which they are learning, and shows their unpretentious, childish vivacity. For example, in the "Under the Pine Tree" chapter:

(Grandma Shi) "Today is the *ji ri*' (anniversary of the death) of Qinzhi's mother, so I've just burned incense. Lin'er, you also go forward and make a bow".

....  
(Xiaolin) "Grandma, isn't it that character 'zui' (guilt) of '*wu ba zhe san wang zhi zui ren ye*' ('The five Paramount Princes offended against the Three Founding Kings'<sup>136</sup>)?"

He did indeed seem funny, and Qinzhi in fact, could not help laughing. Grandma was unable to make head or tail of him.

He was asking about the character 'ji' (abstain) of '*ji ri*' -- '*ji ri*' was, for him, a new word.

...  
Xiaolin again thought: "*Ji ri*, what's *ji ri*? Isn't it a birthday?"  
"今天是琴子妈的忌日，才烧了香，林儿，你也上前去作一作揖。"

...  
"奶奶，是不是五霸者三王之罪入也的那个罪字。"  
他的样子实在好笑，琴子忍不住真笑了。奶奶摸不着头脑。  
他是问忌日的忌，——"忌日"对于他是一个新名词。

...  
小林又想，"忌日，什么叫做忌日？是不是就是生日？" 137

Here, '*wu ba zhe san wang zhi zui ren ye*' (五霸者三王之罪入也; The five Paramount Princes offended against the Three Founding Kings) in Xiaolin's words is a citation from "The Philosopher Gao" ("Gaozi" 告子) in *The Book of Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子) which was used as a text for Chinese children in clan schools to learn by heart. By making Xiaolin ask the naive and unrelated question referring to it, Fei Ming underlines the childish innocence of the schoolboy and cheers up the mournful scene. It would also give an amusing effect to his readers

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<sup>136</sup>The translation is taken from *Mencius*, trans. W.A.C.H. Dobson (London: University of Toronto Press, 1963, rpt. 1966), p. 168.

<sup>137</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, pp. 94-96.

who shared the common educational background. The spontaneity of Xiaolin, who even thinks 'ji ri' (the anniversary of the death of someone held in esteem) and 'sheng ri' (生日, birthday) are the same, also leads to indirect speculation about the relationship between, and the meaning of, life and death. Fei Ming uses children's unfixed, open-mindedness to suggest a fresh way of thinking to the reader. The combination of the citation from the well-established Chinese classic and the child's ingenious free thinking presents a fresh contrast. Other examples of this use of quotations can be found in the chapters, "The Shadows of the Lions"<sup>138</sup> and "Learning Letters"<sup>139</sup>, in which lines from "A Note on 'Kuai zai' Pavilion in Huangzhou" by Su Shi, *The Analects* and *The Doctrine of the Mean* are cited.

The fourth kind of usage is where the quotations (or allusions) are themselves discussed. There are 4 cases of this (10%). In *The Bridge*, his characters quote some literary lines and discuss their thoughts on them. In this case, the sources of the quotations (or allusions) are clarified in the characters' words. For example, in the "Red Flower Mountain" chapter, Fei Ming makes Xiaolin quote some lines from the short story entitled "Fireworks" ("Huapao" 花炮) which he wrote earlier in 1925.<sup>140</sup> He then makes Xiaolin express a

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<sup>138</sup>Ibid., p. 67: Xiaolin cites "This gust of wind is really carefree! The commoners and I could enjoy (it) together" (快哉此风, 寡人所与庶人共者也) from "Huangzhou kuai zai ting ji" by Su Shi.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., p. 98: On seeing Qinzi, Xiaolin jokingly cites "Is it not a joy to have friends come from afar?" (有朋自远方来, 不亦乐乎?) from *The Analects*, Book I ("Xue'er pian"). The translation is from *The Analects*, trans. D.C. Lau, p. 59. Also, in the same chapter, phrases from Chapter 26 of *The Doctrine of the Mean* are cited by Xiaolin as examples of difficult and, to Qinzi and Xiaolin at least, disturbing Chinese characters. See Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 104.

<sup>140</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Huapao -- fangniu de haizi", *Yu Si*, No. 50 (26 October 1925).

positive opinion on their phrasing. It is a self-congratulatory way of using the allusion. Also, in the "Bridge" chapter, Xiaolin quotes Shakespeare's sentence from *The Merchant of Venice*: "Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam" in his conversation with Qinzi, and gives his opinion of it.<sup>141</sup> These allusions are rather discursive and sometimes completely stand out from the rest of the chapters, and are the least successful type of usage. Other two examples are found in the chapters, "Bridge"<sup>142</sup> and "Pear Blossoms are White"<sup>143</sup>, in which lines from Li Shangyin and Wen Tingyun's poems are cited. In this mode, Fei Ming seems to be working in a somewhat metafictional fashion, which tendency (to be discussed later) expands greatly in the novel, *The Life of Mr Maybe*.

Except for the fourth, most rare, kind of usage, Fei Ming's quotations are simply inserted in his texts with hardly any annotations added by the narrator or characters. This tends to create a gap or room for the reader to ruminate over their implications, or to appreciate their poetic connotations. The following section will examine how Fei Ming's 'gaps' are produced in terms of his use of imagery.

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<sup>141</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 308.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., p. 309. Xiaolin discusses Li Shangyin's lines from "Mudan", "I was given in a dream the brush of many colours. Wish to write on petals a message to the clouds of morning" (我是梦中传彩笔, 欲书花叶寄朝云). The translation is taken from A.C. Graham, *Poems of the Late T'ang* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1965), p. 165.

<sup>143</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao*, p. 334: a line, "Tears stream down like thousands of jade chopsticks" (泪流玉箸千条) from Wen Tingyun's *ci*, "He du shen", No. 2 is discussed.

## The leap of imagery

Another characteristic of Fei Ming's pastoral stories is the 'leap' of imagery in them, which the poet Bian Zhilin, has described as "like a dragonfly skimming the surface of the water" (象蜻蜓点水).<sup>144</sup> In other words, Fei Ming frequently moves his focus of imagination from one thing to another without stopping to linger too long on each point of focus. He simply juxtaposes strong images without explaining the relationship between them, and gives the reader a sense of discontinuity or 'gap' which he or she must bridge unaided.

For example, in the "On the Way" chapter of *The Bridge*, Fei Ming describes a scene in which Qinzi crosses a bridge as the more active and lively character, Xizhu, who has already crossed it, is resting and watching her:

In this way, she began to rest, and with no words and with her eyes closed, shook her hair back. Her hair still fell in front of her eyes. Not two *cun* from her lips was a sprig of peach, full of flowers, and level with her closed lips. Qinzi was crossing the bridge, looking at the water. The shallow clear water and the sand seemed as if they could be put on a little table; she was thinking of the bowl of narcissi at home. Here, one ought to look into the distance, and looking down, fragrant grass spread along the banks, studded with wild flowers. In their midst, one must know that water is flowing, but could not see it. Yet, as Qinzi looked harder, all she saw was the clear water without fish, and the sand. Flowing together with the water, her smiling face upon the bridge.

这样，休息起来了，不但话不出口，而且闭了眼睛，摇一摇发。发还是往眼上遮。离唇不到两寸，是满花的桃枝，唇不分上下，枝相平。琴子过桥，看水，浅水澄沙可以放到几上似的，因为她想起家里的一盘水仙花。这里，宜

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<sup>144</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 6.

远望，望下去，芳草绵绵，野花缀岸，其中，则要心里知道，水流而不见。琴子却深视，水清无鱼，只见沙了。与水并是流——桥上她的笑貌。<sup>145</sup>

Hopping through this short passage can be seen impressions of: Xizhu's eyes and hair -- Xizhu's lips and the peach blossoms -- Qinzi and the bridge -- the water and the sand -- the narcissi -- fragrant grass and wild flowers -- the water -- and Qinzi's smiling face. The scene is reminiscent of a montage picture.<sup>146</sup> Because of Fei Ming's minimalistic use of characters and whimsical associations such as 'the shallow clear water and the sand' with 'the narcissi', the reader is liable to feel the gaps between phrases and sentences<sup>147</sup>, and have to fill them in with his own imagination to appreciate the passage fully. Fei Ming's careful selection of his language to avoid flatness can also be found in his use of a variety of synonym words meaning 'to perceive visually': "'kan" shui" ("看"水, 'look at the water; translated as

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<sup>145</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 234-235. This passage is also referred to in Chapter Three, p. 138 of this thesis. In the penultimate Chinese sentence in the passage (这里 ... 水流而不见), Fei Ming omits the subject, and as a result, the reader gets an impression that the narrator is entering Qinzi's perceptive world. It also invites the reader to look at the scene from Qinzi's point of view. Such an effect resembles that of the merged discourse which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

<sup>146</sup>It is interesting that the Russian film director, Sergei Eisenstein, who defined montage as "the maximum laconism for the visual representation of abstract concepts", was also fascinated by the simultaneity effect of compound Chinese ideograms and the juxtaposition of images in *haiku*. For more details, see Alison Bailey, "Breaking the Shell: The Crisis of Poetic Language and the East Asian Influence" (unpublished paper), p. 24.

<sup>147</sup>Liu Xiwei also pointed out the disruption of cohesive statements, or disjunction, in Fei Ming's writing and called it 'kongbai' (空白, 'blank') in the "Huamenglu" chapter of *Juhuaqi* (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1936), pp. 192-193. He added as an explanation, adapting the title of Fei Ming's novel: "Mr Fei Ming's blank is often the result of the lack of an apparent 'bridge' between phrases." (废名先生的空白，往往是句与句间缺乏一道明显的『桥』的结果。) Xie Zhixi 解志熙 also described Fei Ming's 'lyrical stories' (抒情小说; Xie's words) as 'jumping-imagery-type' (兴象跳跃型) in his article, "Xin de shenmei ganzhi yu yishu biao xian fangshi", *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1988, No. 1, p. 251.

'looking at the water), "'wang"xiaqu' ("望"下去, gaze downward; translated as 'to look down'), 'shen"shi"' (深"视", look into the deep; translated as 'looked harder'), and "'jian" sha' ("见"沙, see the sand; in the translation, the past tense of the verb is used).<sup>148</sup>

A similar type of montage-like technique of juxtaposing separate shots of images and splicing them together can also be seen in the Jingling (竟陵) school writings of the Ming period<sup>149</sup>, to which Fei Ming is sometimes compared.<sup>150</sup> In his autobiographical "After Mr

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<sup>148</sup>Edward Gunn points out Fei Ming's "use of synonym cohesion" in "one paragraph" [more accurately, in one dialogue and one paragraph which follows it], in the "Luori" 落日 chapter of *The Bridge* (see *Qiao*, pp. 28-29): 'taomide' (讨米的), 'taofan' (讨饭) and 'jiaohuazi' (叫化子), all meaning 'a beggar'. See *Rewriting Chinese*, p. 127.

<sup>149</sup>The Jingling school of the late Ming period maintained a similar view of anti-imitation to that of the Gong'an school. Representative writers of this school are Zhong Xing (钟惺, 1574-1624) and Tan Yuanchun (谭元春, 1586-1637). Their style is known for its 'indirectness and density'. See Pollard, *A Chinese Look at Literature*, pp. 158-166.

<sup>150</sup>In his preface to Fei Ming's *Jujubes* and *The Bridge*, Zhou Zuoren commented that Fei Ming's concise, eccentric style reminded him of the Jingling school writings. See Zhou Zuoren, "Zao he Qiao de xu", *Zhou Zuoren sanwenchao* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932), pp. 118-119. However, in the preface, Zhou did not explain their similarity with any concrete examples. He seems to have implied that Fei Ming was an equivalent 'figure' of the Jingling school in Republican China. Zhou, unlike many others who viewed the New Literature as a complete break with the past, saw the New Literature as part of Chinese literature as a whole and more precisely as a revival of the Gong'an (公安) school which maintained an anti-imitation/classicism standpoint. [The Gong'an school of the late Ming period rejected imitation and classicism, showed support for spontaneity, idiosyncrasy and truthfulness to one's own experience. Representative writers of this school are Yuan Zongdao (袁宗道, 1560-1600), Yuan Hongdao (袁宏道, 1568-1610) and Yuan Zhongdao (袁中道, 1570-1623). Their prose compositions are characterized as 'fresh and flowing', but their defects as being 'empty and facile' and 'clear without being deep'. See Pollard, "The Kung-an School", *A Chinese Look at Literature*, pp. 158-166. Also, Jonathan Chaves discusses the background and literary views of the Gong'an school with a special focus on Yuan Hongdao in his introduction to his *Pilgrim of the Clouds: Poems and Essays by Yuan Hung-tao and His Brothers* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1978), pp. 11-27. See also another essay by Chaves, "The Expression of Self in the Kung-an School: Non-Romantic Individualism", *Expressions of Self in Chinese Literature*, ed. Robert E. Hegel and Richard C. Hessney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 123-150.] In the above-mentioned preface, Zhou seems to have meant that since the Gong'an school was succeeded by the Jingling school in the Ming period, Fei Ming, who

Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", Fei Ming also suggests indirectly that his style seems to be somewhat close to the Jingling school.<sup>151</sup> It seems necessary then, to explain how they are similar to each other.

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belongs to the second-generation of the Chinese New Literature and writes in an abstruse style, should correspond therefore to the Jingling school. The critics, Yang Yi 杨义, Tang Tao 唐绶 and Shimura Tsuguo 志村嗣生 also refer to the Jingling school in discussing Fei Ming, but they do not explain why and how they make an association between them with concrete examples. See Yang Yi, *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo shi, di yi juan* 中国现代小说史, 第一卷 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1986), p. 459. Tang Tao, "Sishi niandai zhongqi de Shanghai wenzue" 四十年代中期的上海文学, *Wenzue pinglun*, No. 3, 1982, p. 105. Shimura Tsuguo, "Doku Haimei satsuki -- buntai nado no koto --" 読庵名札记 - 文体などのこと -, *Meisei daigaku jinbun gakubu kenkyū kiyō* 明星大学人文学部研究纪要, No. 25 (March 1989), pp. 20-21.

<sup>151</sup>In Chapter Two, the narrator comments on Mr Maybe that: "He [= Mr Maybe] says that he is indeed of the Jingling school: whatever he does, he cannot let it go easy and must always do a lot of thinking" (他说他确乎是竟陵派, 无论做什么都不能容易, 总要用心思). (See *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 476) Here, Fei Ming seems to be referring to the elaborate and difficult character of Jingling school work. In Chapter Eight, there is also a passage, "The phrases in *The Book of Songs* are indeed nicely westernized, that is to say, nicely twisted. 'In the seventh month, in the fields. In the eighth month, under the eaves. In the ninth month, at the door. And in the tenth month, the cricket comes under my bed.' In reading it aloud; it seems to be of the Gong'an school with the fresh and natural quality, but in fact it's the Jingling school syntax. (As for Gong'an and Jingling, there is indeed a distinction between easy and twisted among the styles of Chinese writings, so I'm talking about them for fun. *The Analects* also belongs to the Jingling school.)" (《诗经》的句子真是欧化得可以, 即是说整扭得可以, "七月在野, 八月在宇, 九月在户, 十月蟋蟀入我床下", 诵起来好象是公安派, 清新自然, 其实是竟陵派的句法。(公安竟陵云者, 中国的文体确是有容易与整扭之分, 故戏言之。即《论语》亦属于竟陵一派。)) (The phrases from *Shijing* quoted here are that of "Guofeng, youfeng, qiyue" 国风, 幽风, 七月). Soon after this passage comes Mr Maybe's words, "The subject of these lines is a cricket. It says: a cricket is in the fields in the seventh month, moves under the eaves in the eighth month, to the door in the ninth month, and comes under my bed in the tenth month. If we say it in this way, it isn't good." ("这句话的主词蟋蟀, 是说蟋蟀七月在野, 八月在宇, 九月在户, 到了十月入我床下。我们这样说文章便不好。") (See *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 562) From this, it seems that Fei Ming is pointing out the deliberately twisted, rather unusual way of arranging syntax as a characteristic of the Jingling school. However, his references to the Gong'an and Jingling schools are usually casual and general. See also, Chapter Sixteen of "After Mr Maybe Flew in a Aeroplane", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 699. Fei Ming's attention to the Jingling school seems to have much to do with Zhou Zuoren's taste, since in "Fei Ming xu" 废名序, in *Zhou Zuoren sanwenchao* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932), p. 5, he simply repeats (or parrots) Zhou's theory of the Chinese New literature being a revival of late Ming literature.

According to Yin Gonghong (尹恭弘), Fang Xianjiang (方先江) and Bi Min (毕敏), the main characteristics of Jingling school writings are their unusual syntax<sup>152</sup>, frequent changes of angles and points of view<sup>153</sup>, short sentences, and their use of parallel phrases.<sup>154</sup>

An example of a Jingling school writing, which shows a resemblance to Fei Ming's passage quoted above, is the following extract from "White Stone Village" ("Baishizhuang" 白石庄) in *Sketches of Peking Scenery* (*Dijing jingwu lue* 帝京景物略) by Liu Tong (刘侗, 1594-1637) and Yu Yizheng (于奕正):

Between willows and a brook are doors and windows facing each other, with a pine gnarling and a small kiosk standing in the midst of willows. At the back of the kiosk, with three raised terraces and one curve of bamboos, is "Refreshing Pavilion" with a willow surround. At the back of the terraces are a pool and lotuses; a bridge is above the lotuses. West of the kiosk and the bridge is also a willow surround.

柳溪之中，门临轩对，一松虬，一亭小，立柳中。亭后，台三垒，竹一湾，曰爽阁，柳环之。台后，池而荷，桥荷之上，亭桥之西，柳又环之。<sup>155</sup>

<sup>152</sup>Yin Gonghong, "Lun Jingling pai zai Ming dai shiwen yanbian guocheng zhong de lishi diwei" 论竟陵派在明代诗文演变过程中的历史地位, *Jingling pai yu wan Ming wenxue gexin sichao* 竟陵派与晚明文学革新思潮, ed. Jingling pai wenxue yanjiu hui 竟陵派文学研究会 (Wuchang: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 1987), p. 57.

<sup>153</sup>Fang Xianjiang, "Zhong Xing de sanwen yishu shuolue -- du 'Huanhuaxi ji' 'Xiamei shuo'" 钟惺的散文艺术说略——读《浣花溪记》《夏梅说》，ibid., p. 291.

<sup>154</sup>Bi Min 毕敏, "Jingling pai sanwen de yiben lizuo -- *Dijing jingwu lue*" 竟陵派散文的一本力作——《帝京景物略》，ibid., p. 294. Also, see Kuraishi Takeshirō 念石武四郎, "Kōan ha to Kyūryō ha" 公安派と竟陵派, *Chūgoku bungaku shi* 中国文学史 (Tokyo: Chuō kōron sha, 1956, rpt. 1986), pp. 118-120.

<sup>155</sup>Liu Tong 刘侗 and Yu Yizheng 于奕正, "Baishizhuang" 白石庄, *Dijing jingwu lue* 帝京景物略 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1980), p. 197. "Baishizhuang" is also collected in *Jindai sanwen chao* 近代散文抄, which was edited by Fei Ming's friend, Shen Qiwu 沈启无 and published in December 1932. The preface to *Jindai sanwen chao*, which collects Ming and Qing essays (many pages are spared for the works of the Gong'an and Jingling schools), was written by Zhou Zuoren, and the postscript was by Yu Pingbo. Zhou's preface was first published in *Luotuocao*, No. 21 (29 September 1930), and Yu Pingbo's postscript was also first published there in No. 20 (22 September 1930). See *Jindai sanwen chao*, ed. Shen Qiwu (Hongkong: Tianhong chubanshe, 1957). Qi Ming, "Bingxue xiaopin xuan xu" 冰雪小品选序, *Zhou Zuoren daibiaozuo* 周作人代表作, ed.

Here, each sentence in the original is very short and consists of extremely concise phrases which are linked without conjunctions. Each phrase carries a visual image of one part of the village scenery, and these independent images observed from different viewpoints are presented one after another. To get the total picture of the scenery, the reader has to put these fragments together and make a montage in his or her mind. Also, particularly towards the end of the passage, Liu and Yu employ a peculiar quick shift of visual angles (only partially conveyed in the English version): "At the back of the terraces are a pool and lotuses; a bridge is above the lotuses" (台后, 池而荷, 桥荷之上). The existence of a bridge is introduced abruptly by the upward shift of viewpoint, which gives the reader a rather unusual impression. Instead of applying a more ordinary manner of describing such a scene from a distance, that is, from large to small, in the order of a pool -- a bridge -- lotuses, Liu and Yu depict the pool and lotuses first, skipping the bridge. In "On the Way" quoted above, Fei Ming also employs a crafty shift of visual angles, in a similar way to Liu and Yu: "Flowing together with the water, her smiling face upon the bridge." (与水并是流 -- 桥上她的笑貌。) "Her smiling face upon the bridge" is the image reflected on the surface of clear water, but it inevitably leads the reader to imagine the situation in a three-dimensional way; that is, the scene of her standing on the bridge smiling, and thus the shift occurs.

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Zhang Juxiang 张菊香 (Zhengzhou: Huanghe wenyi chubanshe, 1987), p. 279. Yu Pingbo yanjiu ziliao 俞平伯研究资料, ed. Sun Yurong 孙玉蓉 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1986), p. 456. These facts suggest that Fei Ming was clearly familiar with his Camel Colleague's enthusiasm for Ming essays, including those of the Jingling school.

There is another common stylistic device which both Fei Ming and the Jingling school writers use, that is, parallel phrases. For instance, in Fei Ming's "The Water-chestnuts Marsh":

When the rays of the setting sun no longer reached Taojia Village (at this time, many people would stroll about in the town), there would always be some people climbing up the battlements on the town wall and stretching their necks forward to gaze into the river. Yet, as a result, those on the walls gazed at those below the walls, as if they could not say that the water was clear and the bamboo leaves were green -- those below the walls also gazed at the walls.

落山的太阳射不过陶家村的时候（这时游城的很多）少不了有人攀了城垛子探首望水，但结果城上人望城下人，仿佛不会说水清竹叶绿，——城下人亦望城上。156

In this passage, Fei Ming uses the almost parallel phrases: "those on the walls gazed at those below the walls ... those below the walls also gazed at the walls." (城上人望城下人 ... 城下人亦望城上。) Similarly, in the same story, he repeats two phrases with analogous syntax and wording in one sentence: "The cattle of Taojia Village were put out to pasture at the foot of this dyke; the donkeys of the town were also put out to pasture at the foot of this dyke." (陶家村的牛在这坝脚下放，城里的驴子也在这坝脚下放。)157

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156 Fei Ming, "Lingdang", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 154.

157 *Ibid.*, p. 156. Other examples of Fei Ming's use of parallelism are: in "The Water-chestnuts Marsh", "The pipe was stuck into the belt. The pole was carried on the shoulder." ('*Yangan ji shang yao. Biandan tiao shang jian.*' 烟竿系上腰。扁担挑上肩。) The number of characters used in each sentence is the same, and so is the syntax. The fourth character in both sentences is the word, 'shang' (上). See *ibid.*, p. 158. Also in "The Peach Orchard", when Ah Mao in bed at night is remembering the past, there is a sentence: "Opening eyes was lowering the curtain." ('*Zhang le yan shi luo le mu.*' 张了眼是落了幕。) The first three characters and the last three characters are parallel, with the same syntax, and the same word, 'le' (了) at corresponding parts. See "Taoyuan", *ibid.*, p. 150.

On the other hand, in "Sansheng Nunnery" ("Sansheng'an" 三圣庵) in *Sketches of Peking Scenery* by Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng:

To the east of Desheng Gate are paddy fields of several hundred *mu*<sup>158</sup>, with the irrigation ditches connected to the river. Willows at the dyke planted in rows, and the rice in seedling beds, share dew and mist. Spring turns greener into summer, summer turns yellow into autumn: the townspeople gaze at times; gaze at shades of green in spring to know the development of spring farming; gaze at shades of yellow in autumn also to know the development of autumn farming.

德胜门东，水田数百亩，沟洫浚川上，堤柳行植，与畦中秧稻，分露同烟。春绿到夏，夏黄到秋，都人望有时，望绿浅深，为春事浅深；望黄浅深，又为秋事浅深。<sup>159</sup>

Here, in the last sentence, two pairs of parallel (and almost parallel) phrases can be found. One is "Spring turns greener into summer" (春绿到夏) and "summer turns yellow into autumn" (夏黄到秋). The other is "gaze at shades of green in spring to know the development of spring farming" (望绿浅深，为春事浅深) and "gaze at shades of yellow in autumn also to know the development of autumn farming." (望黄浅深，又为秋事浅深。) In this way, both Fei Ming and the Jingling school writers use the technique of arranging either a contrasting or matching word for each corresponding part in phrases to make them neat and witty.<sup>160</sup> These parallel phrases give a sense of completeness, because their analogous syntax enhances the linear

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<sup>158</sup>*Mu* 亩 is a Chinese unit of area (= 0.0667 hectares).

<sup>159</sup>Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng, "Sansheng'an" 三圣庵, *Dijing jingwu lue* (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1980), p. 32. "Sansheng'an" was collected also in *Jindai sanwenchao*, edited by Shen Qiwu, first published in 1932.

<sup>160</sup>Although the works of other Jingling school writers have not been discussed here, Fang Xianjiang points out Zhong Xing's use of parallel phrases, which seems similar to Fei Ming's, in "Zhong Xing de sanwen yishu shuolie -- du 'Huanhuaxi ji' 'Xiamei shuo'", collected in *Jingling pai yu wan Ming wenxue gexin sichao*, p. 290.

rhythmical flow of the sentences, while the contrast in meaning requires spatial attention. It is true that classical Chinese writings, especially poetry, usually contain parallelism but the Jingling school writers use it particularly often and in a conspicuous way in their prose.<sup>161</sup> Fei Ming's use of parallelism also seems characteristic in his post-May-Fourth 'vernacular Chinese' fiction. Although Fei Ming and the Jingling school are different, most apparently in genre and period of their major literary activities, the two are similar in frequent shifts of images and the use of poetic syntactic techniques.

Returning to the discussion of Fei Ming's special use of condensed language and poetic imagination, the following passage from the "Tea Shop" chapter of *The Bridge* illustrates it most vividly:

Looking at the mountain -- all over red.

'Hurray!'

Shouting this cheer indeed required her cherry-lips -- People usually called them this, but (they were) not very much like that after all. Xizhu's (lips).

But the mountain was not yet a step away. No wind, (but) flowers seemed to be swaying -- The mountain full of flowers was a (red) 'volcano'! The white sun and the blue sky fuelled the flame (of flowers).

一见山——满天红。

『夥!』

喝这一声采，真真耍了她的樱桃口，——平常人家都这样叫，究竟不十分像。细竹的。

但山还不是一脚就到哩。没有风，花似动，——花山是火山!白日青天增了火之焰。<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup>Bi Min, "Jingling pai sanwen de yiben lizuo -- *Dijing jingwu lue*", *Jingling pai yu wan Ming wenxue gexin sichao*, p. 294.

<sup>162</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 241. As shall be discussed later in this chapter, the word "huo" (夥) is a Chu (楚) dialect term which expresses exclamation (surprise or admiration). See *Cihai, xia* 辞海, 下 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1979), p. 3843.

Here, Fei Ming juxtaposes phrases made of the same number of characters such as 'yi jian shan -- man tian hong'. (一见山 -- 满天红。) He uses the contrasting characters, 'yi' (一, one) and 'man' (满, full) at the beginning of the two short phrases divided by the dash, and the characters in the middle of the phrases, 'jian' (见) and 'tian' (天) rhyme. Also, in the sentence, 'mei you feng, hua si dong -- hua shan shi huo shan!' (没有风, 花似动, -- 花山是火山!). The first half of the sentence, before the dash, is divided into two three-character-phrases by a comma, and there is a partial rhyming in the last characters of each phrase, 'feng' (风) and 'dong' (动) with the velar nasals (-ng). The latter half of the sentence, after the dash, also contains parallel words centred around 'shi' (是): 'hua shan' (花山) and 'huo shan' (火山). Here, the same word, 'shan' (山) is repeated, and the characters, 'hua' (花) and 'huo' (火) are also alliterative. The repetition of similar sounds at a regular interval induces a rhythm, and brings out a cheerful musical effect to the scene.<sup>163</sup> These syntactic balances and auditory devices are quite reminiscent of the Tang *jueju* and *lüshi* (律诗)<sup>164</sup> poems. Semantically speaking, the parts in brackets in the translation very roughly indicate what is

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<sup>163</sup> Another example of a rhythmical sentence can be seen in the "Dusk" chapter of *The Bridge*: "Walking past the rows of trees, and looking up at the sky, it was indeed an extremely fine dusky sky." ('Zou guo shu hang, shang shi dao tian, zhen shi yige jihao de tianqi de huanghun de tian.' 走过树行, 上视到天, 真是一个极好的天气的黄昏的天。) Here, the first two phrases are made of four characters each, and the third phrase has a peculiar rhythm because of the frequent insertion of 'de' (的). Also, the word, 'tian' (天) is used twice in the sentence. The sentence is divided into three phrases by commas, and all the three phrases end with the similar sounds, '-ang', '-an', and '-an'. All of these bring out an interesting audible effect in reading the sentence aloud. See Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 203.

<sup>164</sup> *Lüshi* is a poem of eight lines, each containing five or seven characters, with a strict tonal pattern and rhyme scheme.

needed to fill Fei Ming's gaps to gather his meaning. Each sentence finishes abruptly, and there is no logical explanation linking them smoothly. Even simple narrative information such as the fact that the mountain Xizhu is looking at is full of red flowers, must be inferred through non sequiturs linked to a larger context. To picture the scenery, the reader has to inject his or her own imagination into Fei Ming's and work out how to fill in the gaps through his elaborate use of language. For example: 'shan' (山, mountain) -- 'hong' (红, red) -- 'yingtaokou' (樱桃口, cherry-lips; an association with the redness)-- 'hua' (花, flowers) -- 'huo' (火, fire; another association with the redness). Such constant shift of focus of his imagery is indeed "like a dragonfly skimming the surface of the water".

A critic, Hu Shaohua (胡绍华) suggests that the imaginative leaps and the gaps of meaning<sup>165</sup> in Fei Ming's fiction may derive from his belief in Chan Buddhism. In Chan Buddhism, everything in the world is in constant flux and unbounded, and every sense perception is an intuitive reaction which breaks away from a logical mode of thinking. According to Hu, because Fei Ming writes his characters' thoughts and action intuitively, not logically, gaps of meaning occur in his writings.<sup>166</sup> This seems quite possible considering Fei Ming's views that literature is the symbol of that which lies deep inside one's inner life<sup>167</sup>, and that literary works should flow naturally from one's own mind.<sup>168</sup> Such a writing ethos inevitably makes the writer

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<sup>165</sup>Hu's original word is "语句之间的'跳跃'".

<sup>166</sup>Hu Shaohua, "Fei Ming xiaoshuo yu chandao touying", *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1992, No. 1, pp. 91-96.

<sup>167</sup>See pp. 200-201 of this chapter.

<sup>168</sup>See Chapter One, p. 74 of this thesis.

project his internal self onto his characters, and thus his characters become "all buried inside his ego and live the writer's life everywhere", as Zhu Guanqian pointed out.<sup>169</sup> Earlier in this chapter, the word, "character-centred" was used to underline Fei Ming's attention to the character's psychology instead of plot, but to be more precise, his stories should be described as "self (the writer)-centred". The following example from the "Courtyard" chapter of *The Bridge* shows the vividness of Fei Ming's presentation of his character's inner life, and contains the constant shifts of focus of images, syntactic and auditory devices, and Fei Ming's 'self-centredness', which were discussed above:

He blew out the lamp. Maybe he didn't like sleeping with the light on, or maybe this way, the lamplight there would look bright through his papered window. He knew that neither Qinzi nor Xizhu would have gone to sleep yet. Between their rooms was a rectangular courtyard. At the whiteness of the window paper and each square lattice, as if he had never seen rays of light, he gazed with great care. In fact, he had seen many paintings, and those rays of light were all filled with life. No sound of anything astir did he hear. Just before he still heard them whispering. This quietness is really quiet. In a dark corner of that courtyard grow mosses, and they're perhaps growing now. "What are you doing?", suddenly as if he was complaining, but he couldn't answer what they were doing there, leaving the bright light on. No, there were just no answers. To put it more properly, that just wasn't a 'question'.

Of course, he asked himself such a question.

灯他吹熄了。或者他不喜欢灯照着睡，或者是，这样那边的灯光透在他的窗纸上亮。他晓得琴子同细竹都还没有睡。中间隔了一长方天井。白的窗纸，一个一个的方格子，仿佛他从来没有看见光线，小心翼翼。其实他看得画多，那些光线都填了生命。一点响动也没有，他听。刚才还听见她们唧唧咕咕的。这个静，真是静。那个天井的暗黑的一角里长着苔藓，大概正在生长着。『你们干什么？』忽然若不平，答不出她们在那里干什么，明明的点着亮儿。不，简直没有答。说得更切当些，简直也不是问。

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<sup>169</sup>See p. 187 of this chapter.

当然，他问了自己那么一句。170

Here, Fei Ming describes the character, Xiaolin's visual and auditory perception and thoughts mostly through the narrator. Yet, in the latter half of the sentence, "In fact, he had seen many paintings, and those rays of light were all filled with life" (其实他看得画多，那些光线都填了生命), it is possible to take the narrative voice as either the narrator's or Xiaolin's.<sup>171</sup> This merged discourse<sup>172</sup> brings out the impression that the narrator is entering into Xiaolin. The next sentence, "No sound of anything astir did he hear" (一点响动也没有，他听) is also merged discourse: "No sound of anything astir" seems like a direct description of Xiaolin's impression. Furthermore, the part: "This quietness is really quiet. In a dark corner of that courtyard grow mosses, and they're perhaps growing now" (这个静，真是静。那个天井的暗黑的一角里长着苔藓，大概正在生长着) can be taken almost as Xiaolin's interior monologue, if the former sentence was not so linguistically well-designed (a more 'natural' way would be something like: "It's really quiet"; *Jing jile* 静极了 / *Zhen anjing* 真安静). In "This quietness is really quiet" ('*Zhe ge jing, zhen shi jing*' 这个静，真是静), Fei Ming divides the sentence into two phrases at equal three-character-length, with the word, '*jing*' (静) repeated. Here, he seems to intend a rhythmical effect as in poetry. The latter sentence could be taken as Xiaolin's direct free thought. In the passage, Fei Ming also employs a succession of reiterative locutions to create

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<sup>170</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 282-283.

<sup>171</sup>Although I translated the latter part of the sentence in the past tense, since the Chinese in the original text does not indicate tense, it is possible to interpret it as Xiaolin's thought as he formulates it in the present tense.

<sup>172</sup>See footnote 64, above in this chapter.

lively, musical effects: "yi ge yi ge" (一个一个; translated as 'each'), "xiao xin yi yi" (小心翼翼; translated as 'with great care'), "ji ji gu gu" (唧唧咕咕; onomatopoeia: translated as 'whispering'), and "ming ming" (明明; translated as 'bright'). He rapidly shifts the focus of images: lamp -- courtyard -- light at the window -- 'life' -- sound -- mosses -- Qinzi and Xizhu. The last four sentences of the passage would show how Fei Ming's character is "leading the writer's life": Xiaolin is made to say, "What are you doing?", but Fei Ming then later intrusively reveals that the question was in fact, not voiced. It seems as if he is describing the question in order to play his narrative game. In this way, Xiaolin is somewhat 'abused' for the sake of Fei Ming's attempt to make the reader curious and amused.

#### **The presentation of new ways of looking at things**

Fei Ming also shows various things in a new light by his imaginative use of laconic language.<sup>173</sup> He sometimes uses abstract words in empirical situations, and draws out a multiplicity of meaning. He also uses everyday words to describe abstract ideas and guides the reader into his original ways of looking at things. For example, in the "Pagoda" chapter of *The Bridge*:

Xizhu showed Xiaolin a picture, which she had painted herself: just painted, on a tiny piece of paper, a few lines of rain and a girl holding an umbrella. Xiaolin received it by hand and looked at it silently.

"What do you think?"

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<sup>173</sup>This is probably what Zhu Guangqian and Ma Liangchun call "li qu" (理趣, intellectual interest). See Meng Shi, "Qiao", *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1 July 1937), p. 187 and Ma Liangchun, "Yi wei ju you dute fengge de zuojia (daixu)", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 3.

Said she, also looking at her work in Xiaolin's hand. Promptly she opened a drawer and brought out another piece of paper -- "Here, there is also one of a pagoda."

"Oh, this pagoda is very real indeed -- where did you see such a pagoda?"

He said, smiling, still holding the rainy realm in his hand. He marvelled for a moment, but perhaps the rain had not been finished looking at; it moved on to the pagoda.

细竹给画小林看，她自己画的，刚画起，小小的一张纸，几根雨线，一个女子打一把伞。小林接在手上默默的看。

『你看怎么样？』

说着也看着小林的手上她的作品。连忙又打开抽屉，另外拿出一张纸——

『这里还有一个塔。』

『哎呀，这个塔真像得很，——你在那里看见这么一个塔？』

他说着笑了，手拿雨境未放。惊叹了一下，恐怕就是雨没有看完，移到塔上。<sup>174</sup>

In this passage, Fei Ming skilfully uses the fairly abstract word, 'yujing' (雨境; translated as 'the rainy realm') to mean two things: one is Xizhu's picture of rain, and the other is Xiaolin's imagining of the rainy scene. In either case, the combination of the conceptual word, 'yujing' and the practical movement of 'shou na ... wei fang' (手拿 ... 未放; holding something (...) in one's hand and not let it go) is quite unusual. The last sentence in the passage is also curious. It describes the situation in which Xiaolin is so captivated by the strong image of rain depicted in the first picture that he cherishes an illusion of seeing rain falling over the pagoda in the second picture. Fei Ming tries to express such meaning with very simple everyday language and without adding a precise explanation. In other words, he just writes abruptly that the rain moved on to the pagoda, instead of saying in a more obvious and long-winded way that the rain

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<sup>174</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 347-348. Another, more concrete, but perhaps less Fei Ming-like translation of this last sentence would be: "He marvelled for a moment, as he was afraid that the rain had not been finished looking at and that he had to move onto the picture of a pagoda".

image from the first picture was carried over to the scene of a pagoda in the second picture in Xiaolin's absorbed frame of mind.

Perhaps an even more aberrant example, in which Fei Ming shows the reader a fresh way of looking at matters in everyday life, can be found in the "Willows" chapter of *The Bridge*:

Xiaolin had come to Shijia Village to spend Qingming. Tomorrow was the Qingming Festival.

The sun was about to set, and many people in Shijia Village were at the riverside, "breaking willows" to take home and to hang at their doors tomorrow. They gradually left, and each person took at least one bough, but the willows were still so exuberant. The willows in Shijia Village were probably already very old. What have they lost? Just like the high blue sky, they have lost every-burst of joyous screams; the higher that appears, the greener these appear as if they had used an immeasurable amount of energy to look as green as possible.<sup>175</sup> If a wind blows suddenly at this time, the willows would be enlivened altogether, which wouldn't be a bit puzzling; what's puzzling is that they are so mutely green. So Xiaolin thought under the trees.

小林来到史家庄过清明。明天就是清明节。太阳快要落山，史家庄好多人在河岸『打杨柳』，拿回去明天挂在门口。人渐渐走了，一人至少拿去了一枝，而杨柳还是那样蓬勃。史家庄的杨柳大概都颇有了岁数。它失掉了什么呢？正同高高的晴空一样，失掉了一阵又一阵欢喜的呼喊，那是越发现得高，这越发现得绿，仿佛用了无数精神尽量绿出来。这时倘若陡然生风，杨柳一齐抖擞，一点也不叫人奇怪，奇怪倒在它这样哑着绿。小林在树下是作如是想。<sup>176</sup>

The earlier part of the passage is straightforward. The intriguing part is from "What have they lost?" (它失掉了什么呢?) to "... what's

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<sup>175</sup>In my translation, in the phrase, "the higher that appears, the greener these appear", "that" refers to the sky and "these" to willows. However, due to the nature of Chinese language, it is ambiguous whether the words, "Na" (那) and "zhe" (这) are plural or singular. It is therefore also possible to interpret both of them as referring to willows. In any case, the ambiguity is thought-provoking and adds subtle nuances to the passage.

<sup>176</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), pp. 189-190.

puzzling is that they are so mutely green." (奇怪倒在它这样哑着绿。) It is the content of Xiaolin's thought. The question; "What have they lost?" urges the reader to think from the willows' point of view. Then, in "Just like the high blue sky, they have lost every burst of joyous screams" (正同高高的晴空一样, 失掉了一阵又一阵欢喜的呼喊), Fei Ming gives an answer that trees, like the sky, would lose people's lively, happy screaming noises which are made when they gather on such occasions as "breaking willows". Here, there is an element of personification of the sky and trees. Fei Ming shows the everyday world, not from the usual, dominant, humanity's point of view, but from the fresh, rare point of view of nature itself. Immediately after this comes: "the higher that appears, the greener these appear as if they had used an immeasurable amount of energy to look as green as possible". (那是越发现得高, 这越发现得绿, 彷彿用了无数精神尽量绿出来。) The first half; "the higher that appears, the greener these appear" (那是越发现得高, 这越发现得绿) turns back to Xiaolin's point of view. The shift of viewpoints occurs swiftly here from the height of the sky and trees to the lower position of Xiaolin. Then, in the second half; "as if they had used an immeasurable amount of energy to look as green as possible" (彷彿用了无数精神尽量绿出来), the trees, which Xiaolin is looking up at, are personified. Fei Ming describes Xiaolin's imagining that to look very green, a tree, as if it were a human being, makes a conscious effort, using "an immeasurable amount of energy". To express this, Fei Ming employs the word, 'lǜ' (绿, green) in an unusual way: instead of the normal usage as an adjective, he turns it into a verb. Also, in the phrase towards the end of the passage, "what's puzzling is that they are so mutely green" (奇怪倒在它这样哑着绿), he

keeps comparing the trees to human beings, and describes the scene in which they stand silently, appearing really lush to Xiaolin's eyes, as 'ya zhe lü' (哑着绿; translated as "so mutely green"<sup>177</sup>). The word, 'ya' is usually an adjective, but here, it is used as a verb.<sup>178</sup>

In this passage, as has been suggested, Fei Ming draws the reader's attention to natural objects by personifying them. He repeatedly depicts the willows' luxuriance, and vigour (by the word, 'jingshen' 精神; 'spirit'), and emphasizes the 'life' of nature. He also hints at the brief span of human life in contrast to the longevity of willows by referring to the oldness and lushness of willows on the evening before the Qingming Festival: the time when people mourn for the dead by visiting their tombs. The phrase: "what have they lost ... they have lost every burst of joyous screams" also euphemistically underlines the fact that the trees outlive the crowd of people who gather around them every year. This short passage shows again Fei Ming's Daoist view of nature, that is, that a human being is only a small part of nature, not a conqueror of it.

He also packs his philosophical conception into the scantiest of words. For example, in the "Tree" chapter of *The Bridge*:

"In the North, there are packs and packs of camels, as much as cattle here."

This was a word, which only drew him an outline of a camel; on green green grass at a riverside, a camel was walking in big

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<sup>177</sup>I translated it this way, since the English word 'mute' cannot be used as a verb, although Fei Ming uses the Chinese equivalent word, 'ya' as a verb.

<sup>178</sup>In "The Shadows of the Lions" chapter of *The Bridge*, Fei Ming also presents the idea of a non-human object's speech. There is a scene in which Xiaolin feels lonely due to the fact that a dragonfly does not chirrup. See Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 72.

strides, and Xiaolin was standing far far away, looking up at it endlessly.

In a blink, his eyes met Xizhu's bamboo flute.

"I can't play it."

Yet, a feeling of sound was overflowing.<sup>179</sup>

Silence is sometimes like this sound.

『北方骆驼成群，同我们这里牛一般多。』

这是一句话，只替他画了一只骆驼的轮廓，青青河畔草，骆驼大踏步走，小林远远站着仰望不已。

转眼落在细竹的箫的上面。

『我不会吹。』

但弥满了声音之感。

Silence 有时像这个声音。180

The second sentence; "This was a word ... looking up at it endlessly." (这是一句话 ... 仰望不已。) describes Xiaolin's musings drawn out from the remark on camels in the first sentence. Yet, Fei Ming does not clearly explain that it is the content of Xiaolin's fantasy using phrases such as "in Xiaolin's imagination" or "Xiaolin felt as if ...". Instead, he uses a figurative expression that the word drew for Xiaolin an outline of a camel. In "on green green grass at a riverside, a camel was walking in big strides, and Xiaolin was standing far far away, looking up at it endlessly" (青青河畔草，骆驼大踏步走，小林远远站着仰望不已), Fei Ming brings out a poetic effect by the brevity of phrase and the repeated use of reiterative locution. In the first phrase which is a citation of a line from one of the "Nineteen Ancient Poems"<sup>181</sup>, the

<sup>179</sup>I translate "但弥满了声音之感" this way although it is more syntactically faithful to the original to put it as "Yet, it was pregnant with a feeling of sound". If the subject "it" were added to make the English smooth, the meaning of the sentence would become too clear and fixed. Chan Buddhist-influenced Fei Ming probably intended to imply a multiplicity of meaning here.

<sup>180</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 346. "Silence" is in English in the original text.

<sup>181</sup>The first line of the poem, "Qing qing hepan cao" (青青河畔草). The "Nineteen Ancient Poems" were the five-character-line verses written by anonymous poets sometime between second century B. C. and second century A. D. during the Han Dynasty and later collected in *Wenxuan* which was edited by Xiao Tong (萧统, 501-531). See *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu Zhongguo wenxue* 中国大百科全书 中国文学 I (Beijing, Shanghai: Zhongguo dabaike

syntactic finesse of Chinese language enables the noun 'hepan' (河畔, riverside) to work as an adjective which modifies 'cao' (草, grass). In a fairly short sentence, he uses two reiterative locutions, 'qing qing' (青青, green green) and 'yuan yuan' (远远, far far). As if he was trying to strike an auditory balance with these, he also puts together two characters with similar sounds; 'da' (大) 'ta' (踏) in the middle phrase.

The lines towards the end of the passage, "I can't play it." Yet, a feeling of sound was overflowing. Silence is sometimes like this sound" (『我不会吹。』但弥满了声音之感。Silence 有时像这个声音), contain big gaps of meaning. Here, the first sentence is Xiaolin's remark. The second sentence can be interpreted in at least two ways, partially because Fei Ming omits the subject which indicates what was filled with the "feeling of sound". One interpretation is that it describes what is going on in Xiaolin's mind: in other words, Xiaolin's wish to play the bamboo flute filled his fantasy world with a feeling of sound. The other way is that it refers to the general atmosphere of the scene: in other words, Xiaolin's longing for the sound of the bamboo flute, which is expressed in his plaintive remark, filled the scene with the illusion of a sound. In any case, "sound" here is not a substance but an idea. However, Fei Ming makes such non-substantial "sound" into a substance by twisting it into "a feeling of sound" (声音之感). This kind of twist happens again in the last sentence; "Silence is sometimes like this sound". By beginning the sentence with "silence", Fei Ming confirms the "sound" in the

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quanshu chubanshe, 1986), pp. 192-193, and Charles Hartman, "Poetry", *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. William H. Nienhauser, Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 64.

previous sentence was non-existent, objectively. Yet, he then affirms that silence (= non-existent sound) is sometimes like "this sound". Because he does not clarify the exact meaning of "this sound", the sentence is again endowed with different possibilities of interpretation. If "this sound" is taken as the the sound which can be heard in a fantasy, the sentence suggests that non-existent sound (= silence) is like a sound which could be substantial in one's subjective mind. On the other hand, if "this sound" is taken negatively as nothing but a bystander's illusion, the sentence suggests that non-existent sound is like a sound of non-substance. He makes this last sentence seem like a general statement by not using any words specific to the scene. His use of the English word, "silence" instead of a Chinese word made of ideogrammatic characters with more precise meanings, such as "*wusheng*" (无声, noiseless) or '*jijing*' (寂静, stillness), also seems to contribute to producing the sense of universality.<sup>182</sup> His implication of the ambiguity of existence is reminiscent of the Daoist/Chan Buddhist idea that everything is nothing; just a phantom of one's mind-heart.<sup>183</sup>

Thus, in his stories, Fei Ming elaborates his language and often stimulates the reader by presenting uncommon ways of viewing various things. This is perhaps one of the reasons why his stories

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<sup>182</sup>The insertion of foreign words into Chinese text was fashionable among Chinese intellectuals of the May Fourth era.

<sup>183</sup>Fei Ming writes of his Buddhist view of the world in Chapter Thirteen of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane": "Also, because of the tenacity for things, the world exists; therefore the world is a dream, a phantom ... Everything is an embodiment of intellect and everyone is an embodiment of intellect ... Everything is a forgery of intellect." (又因为执著物而有世界, 所以世界是一场梦了, 是幻 ... 什么都是理智的化身, 谁都是理智的化身。... 一切都是理智假造的了。) See *Fei Ming xuanji*, pp. 651-652.

have been claimed to be obscure by many critics, as Fei Ming himself pointed out in his preface to *Selected Stories of Fei Ming*:

No wonder people said in the past that my writings were hard to understand; now I myself read them and there are many I don't understand, either. The reason is quite easy: parts reflecting life are easy to understand, and the depth of one's mind is not easy to understand.

难怪从前人家说我的文章难懂，现在我自己读着有许多也不懂了。道理很简单，里面反映了生活的就容易懂，个人的脑海深处就不容易懂。<sup>184</sup>

Since this comment was written in 1957 in the self-critical mode, it would be perhaps appropriate not to take every part of it seriously. However, as he suggests, the obscurity of his writings seems to derive partially from his laconic expression of abstract ideas at "the depth of one's mind", as shown in the above examples.

#### **The active role of the reader**

It seems that Fei Ming is very demanding on his readers. His way of breaking up the time-flow of narrative forces the reader to connect the scattered events and reconstruct his or her own summary from fragments. His use of concise language and his constant shifts of imagery also oblige the reader to read his pastoral stories in the same manner as he or she reads poems: that is, continually fitting fragments together into a meaningful pattern.<sup>185</sup> To borrow Joseph Frank's words, Fei Ming's pastoral stories employ 'spatial form': Fei Ming 'forces the reader to juxtapose disparate

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<sup>184</sup>Fei Ming, "Xu", *Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan*, p. 2.

<sup>185</sup>As in much Chinese poetry, Fei Ming uses allusions or quotations as a shorthand way of conveying the atmosphere of a particular scene and expects his readers to recognize and appreciate such allusions.

images spatially, in a moment of time' and places burdens on the reader by his 'assumption that a unified spatial apprehension of his work would ultimately be possible.'<sup>186</sup>

Considering his unfamiliarity with Western modernist fiction and his fascination with the non-causal relationship between time and space in traditional Chinese poetry, it seems that Fei Ming's 'spatial form' is rooted in the Chinese tradition.<sup>187</sup> Fei Ming's deliberate taciturnity, fondness for describing abstract ideas, and reliance on quotations in his pastoral stories also seem to suggest a particular expectation of his readership: he seems to regard his (desirable) readers as imaginative, active beings who can appreciate his ideation and 'artistic conception' by bridging the gaps he creates by themselves.<sup>188</sup>

Such an expectation on Fei Ming's part is somewhat reminiscent of the traditional Chinese Intuitionist view of poetry. According to the Intuitionist school which was influenced by Chan Buddhism, the essence of poetry lies in its embodiment of the external world as reflected through the poet's mind, as well as its revelation of the

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<sup>186</sup>See Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature", *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1963), pp. 3-62. Incidentally, David Lodge summarizes the meaning of 'spatial form' in modernist poetics concisely as "giving unity to a literary work by a pattern of interconnected motifs that can only be perceived by 'reading over' (i.e., re-reading) the text". See Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1992), p. 82.

<sup>187</sup>See pp. 211-212 of this thesis.

<sup>188</sup>The writer He Liwei also suggests, in his letter to me dated 4 April 1993, the extent of the active role of the reader which Fei Ming's fiction requires. He writes: "The 'reading obstacles' in Fei Ming's fiction shows mainly in his language. His language requires repeated reading because it contains so many 'unspoken words left to the understanding of the reader'. Fei Ming's fiction cannot be skimmed through." (废名的小说的"阅读障碍"主要表现在他的语言上。他的语言要反复读,因为他的语言有非常多的"潜台词"。废名的小说是不能浏览的。)

internal world of feeling.<sup>189</sup> Its first important spokesman, Yan Yu (严羽, 1180-1235) suggested that poetry itself is concerned with intuitive apprehension, something that lies beyond words, and that words themselves are connotative signs which, while limited entities in their own right, have the potential to suggest limitless ideas.<sup>190</sup> Fei Ming, who was very interested in attaining 'spiritual enlightenment' through Chan meditation, probably felt empathy with the literary view of capturing the spirit of things with inspiration and intuition.<sup>191</sup>

On the other hand, the following comment on poetry by Jonathan Culler also seems to be applicable to the appreciation of Fei Ming's pastoral stories:

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<sup>189</sup>James J. Y. Liu, "4. The Intuitionist View: Poetry As Contemplation", *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, pp. 86-87. Fang Xide also states that although Fei Ming explained his way of writing using Baudelaire's poem, "Windows", he also learnt a similar suggestive technique from traditional Chinese literary theory of 'artistic conception' (意境). See his book, *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo yu wenxue chuantong* 中国现代小说与文学传统 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1992), pp. 320-321. Du Xiuhua also suggests a link between Fei Ming's imaginative leaps and Yan Yu's Intuitionist view of poetry in "Qiao: zai chanjing zhong gouzhu", published in *Liaoning daxue xuebao*, 1993, No. 1, pp. 97-101 and p. 107.

<sup>190</sup>Richard John Lynn, "Orthodoxy and Enlightenment: Wang Shih-chen's Theory of Poetry and Its Antecedents", *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm. Theodore De Bary (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 227.

<sup>191</sup>Fei Ming's sympathy with Kuriyagawa Hakuson's literary theory in *Symbols of Agony* (mentioned in pp. 200-202 of this thesis) also seems to stem from the views he shared with the traditional Chinese Intuitionist school. Both Kuriyagawa and the Intuitionist school consider that the appreciation of a literary work becomes possible when the reader captures its spirit, not through deep analytical thought, but with a kind of intuition. The same is true of Chinese landscape painting theory. Wucius Wong writes: "Revelation of personality is an unavoidable part of the painting process, as the artist's subconscious thoughts as well as his conscious intentions naturally shape the elements." He also states: "The Chinese artist sees idea [意 - A. Kudo] as a kind of inner vision formed in the mind-heart [心 - A. Kudo], and also as a way of externalizing this vision from the mind-heart." See Wucius Wong, *The Tao of Chinese Landscape Painting: Principles & Methods* (Hong Kong: Design Press, 1991), pp. 22-23 and p. 73.

And poems which succeed as fragments or as instances of incomplete totality depend for their success on the fact that our drive towards totality enables us to recognize their gaps and discontinuities and to give them a thematic value.<sup>192</sup>

Because of the active role demanded of the reader by Fei Ming's poetic, pastoral stories, his readership has been limited. A Chinese critic in the 1930s, Liu Xiwei described the situation:

Mr Fei Ming's works, and his artistic conception in them which is a kind of embodiment of abstract thoughts, limit the number of his readers. He is forever solitary, sequestered. The small number of his readers, though few, are yet fortunate ...  
废名先生的作品，一种具体化的抽象的意境，仅仅限于少数的读者。他永远是孤独的，简直是孤洁的。他那少数的读者，虽然少数，却是有了福的 ...<sup>193</sup>

Such great dependence on the readers was perhaps another reason why Fei Ming's stories have been largely neglected in China, especially since the 1940s when the 'drive towards totality' was to be felt in politics, rather than in appreciating poetic, pastoral fiction.

### Other characteristics

In addition to the scenery described in his pastoral stories, Fei Ming's local colour can be found in some of his Southern Chinese vocabulary.<sup>194</sup> For example, in "The Water-chestnuts Marsh", the southern words, 'xiangzi' (巷子; an alley) and 'chiyan' (吃烟; to smoke)

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<sup>192</sup>Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics -- Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, rpt. 1986), p. 171.

<sup>193</sup>Liu Xiwei, "Biancheng -- Shen Congwen xiansheng zuo" 边城 - 沈从文先生作, in *Juhuaqi* (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1936), p. 70.

<sup>194</sup>Shen Congwen pointed out: "The strength of the writer's [=Fei Ming's] local colour is expressed clearly in the language his characters use." (作者地方性强, 且显明的表现在作品人物的语言上。) See Shen Congwen, "Lun Feng Wenbing", *Shen Congwen wenji*, Vol. 11 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1985), p. 98. Also, see Edward Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese*, p. 126.

are used instead of the northern words, 'hutong' (胡同, an alley), 'chouyan' (抽烟; to smoke) or 'xiyan' (吸烟; to smoke). In *The Bridge*, the Chu (楚) dialect words which express exclamation (surprise or admiration), 'huo' (夥) and 'huoyi' (夥颐; oh, wow, and so on) are employed.<sup>195</sup> Edward Gunn suggests that Fei Ming's play with regional speech is evident in such phrases as 'nalai mama kan' (拿来妈妈看, show it to Mama) for 'nalai gei mama kan' (拿来给妈妈看); 'gei qian ta' (给钱他, give him money) for 'gei ta qian' (给他钱); and 'buxiaoshuo' (不消说, needless to say) for 'buxuyao shuo' (不须要说) or 'buyong shuo' (不用说).<sup>196</sup> Perhaps another example of Fei Ming's use of regional speech is found in Xizhu's dialogue in the "Willows" chapter of *The Bridge*: 'lingwai zai zha yi ge ta' (另外再扎一个他, prick another one[=willow ball], which is probably a less grammatical but colloquial version of 'lingwai zai zha yige' 另外再扎一个).<sup>197</sup> Fei Ming also mingles the rhetoric of Chinese vernacular novels such as 'zhisuoyi' (之所以, why)<sup>198</sup> and 'kanguan' (看官, Readers ...)<sup>199</sup> and employs a wide range of Chinese -fixed idioms.

Another significant stylistic characteristic of Fei Ming is his increased use of narratorial intrusions, a topic which shall be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six. In his pastoral stories, especially in *The Bridge*, the narrator occasionally cannot check his

<sup>195</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), the chapters, "Chapu" (p. 241; also, see p. 242 of this chapter), and "Huahongshan" (p. 260).

<sup>196</sup>Edward Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese*, p. 127. It is also possible that Fei Ming uses the word, "buxiaoshuo" hinting at the Chinese vernacular novel form, in say, *Shuihu zhuan*.

<sup>197</sup>Fei Ming, *Qiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1986), p. 195. I consulted several Chinese informants.

<sup>198</sup>Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>199</sup>For example, *ibid.*, p. 260 and p. 373.

self-consciousness and intrudes into the narrated world. For example, in the "Red Flower Mountain" chapter, the narrator inserts this digressive comment:

Another petal fell from the flower in Xizhu's hand. Saying this to scientists would really be irrelevant. -- Haha, Readers, don't laugh, this is the author's joke. She regretted the falling, but it was too late. As soon as she heard it, she looked up, smiling, and said: "Oh, dear!"

花又从细竹的手上落了一瓣。同科学家这么讲，真是风马牛不相及！——哈哈，看官不要笑，这是执笔人的一句笑话，她悔之而不及，花一响仰首一面笑——『哎呀！』<sup>200</sup>

The number of such intrusions increases in Part Two of *The Bridge*, as the time of writing drew closer to that of *The Life of Mr Maybe*.<sup>201</sup>

As has been shown in this chapter, Fei Ming manifests his individuality further in his lyric-poetic style, which leads away from the existing structures of organized narrative and logical discourse and distances itself from such expectations.<sup>202</sup> The lyrical quality of his pastoral stories takes roots in his emphasis on presenting internal life rather than describing details of external events and their interrelationship. Because of this, the plot-structures of his stories are very weak. Instead, their imagistic nature is strong, and to enhance it, he often omits 'empty' words (such as personal pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions), uses laconic language and adapts many techniques from traditional Chinese poetry. Fei Ming often

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<sup>200</sup>Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>201</sup>This tendency is much more marked in *The Life of Mr Maybe*.

<sup>202</sup>Edward Gunn also points out the originality of Fei Ming's style in his book, *Rewriting Chinese*, p. 128.

takes advantage of the syntactic flexibility of the Chinese language and creates his own words and phrases, which sometimes show unusual ways of looking at everyday matters. What I have termed merged discourse also owes much to the lack of tense specificity in Chinese verbs. Fei Ming's characteristic use of such unusual discourse creates an ambiguity between the voices of the narrator and the character, conveying the impression of direct perceptions and thoughts, and thus enhancing the lyrical quality of his stories. He occasionally enlivens his passages with auditory effects by designing the arrangement of his words. In *The Bridge*, he also employs many quotations, mostly from Chinese traditional works (the majority of which are poems), mainly to describe scenes and characters economically, or to draw empathy with the fictional situation from the reader, or to add some humour to his novel. His concision of language and frequent shifts in the focus of the imagery also leave much room for the reader to mull over his indeterminacy of meaning. This ambiguity seems to be partially the product of his Chan Buddhist-influenced intuitional literary view. The reader is often invited to participate in completing the full picture of the imaginative world of his pastoral stories. Because of this demand of the readers' keen appreciation, his pastoral stories have never been to everyone's taste. However, among those who did or do appreciate them, they have been quite influential.<sup>203</sup> This point, and Fei Ming's

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<sup>203</sup>Among Chinese critics at the present time, Yang Yi notes the speciality and importance of Fei Ming's style in the history of Chinese fiction clearly in "Di shiyi zhang, Fei Ming he Shen Congwen de wenhua qingzhi" 第十一章, 废名和沈从文的文化情致 in his book, *Wenhua chongtu yu shenmei xuanze -- ershi shiji Zhongguo xiaoshuo de wenhua fenxi* 文化冲突与审美选择 -- 二十世纪中国小说的文化分析 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1988), p. 230.

importance in the history of modern Chinese fiction, will be discussed later in the conclusion. The next chapter will examine the most bizarre of Fei Ming's stories, *The Life of Mr Maybe* and will look to see whether Fei Ming was totally content with his pastoral story writings.

## Chapter Six

### Fei Ming's Mock-Pastoral Novel, *The Life of Mr Maybe*

While Fei Ming was increasingly becoming attracted to the Daoist hermitic ideal of standing aloof from worldly affairs, he was very sensitive about his own behaviour.<sup>1</sup> He also thought of the problems with his own writing<sup>2</sup> and the gap between his ideal society which was embodied in his pastoral stories, and the dark chaotic reality of the successive civil wars of the late 1920s.<sup>3</sup>

*The Life of Mr Maybe*<sup>4</sup> (*Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan* 莫须有先生传)<sup>5</sup>, which was conceived during the period of Fei Ming's occasional

<sup>1</sup>Zhu Guangqian described Fei Ming as "an extreme introvert" (一个极端的内倾者). See Meng Shi, "Qiao", *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1 July 1937).

<sup>2</sup>On top of his general depression, in the late 1920s, Fei Ming seems to have been inclined to feel sensitive about his writing. In his note attached to his short story published in 1927, "The Mourning Ceremony", Fei Ming wrote: "This is an old manuscript written a month ago. This last couple of days, I have felt annoyed with every single one of my writings and I have nothing to say about them, either. I haven't done things perfunctorily in my life, but today here I am writing, which is really perfunctory! Bah!" (这是一月以前的旧稿。这两天我对于我的无论什么文章都讨厌，我也没有话说。我生平没有做过敷衍的事，今天我还得写字，我实是敷衍！呸！) This note was written in April 1927. See Bing Huo, "Zhuidaohui", *Yu Si*, No. 130 (7 May 1927). Also, in May 1927, he wrote in his essay, "Taking of Dreams": "Many people say that my writings are obscure, and they cannot see what I mean. But how hard I try to unveil my mind gradually! I even wonder if they are too clear. It seems that many poets have mentioned this kind of plight." (有许多人说我的文章 obscure [sic], 看不出我的意思。但我自己是怎样的用心，要把我的心幕逐渐展出来！我甚至于疑心太clear的利害。这样窘况，好象有许多诗人都说过。) See Fei Ming, "Shuomeng", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 321. The words, "obscure"[sic] and "clear" are in English in the original text.

<sup>3</sup>This prompted the misanthropic period in the late 1920s, which was discussed in Chapter One, pp. 42-43 and p. 58 of this thesis.

<sup>4</sup>The word, "moxuyou" 莫须有 originates in *Songshi*, "Yue Fei zhuan" 宋史, 岳飞传: Yue Fei 岳飞 was framed in a case by Qin Hui 秦桧. Han Shizhong 韩世忠 felt uneasy, so called on Qin Hui and interrogated him about the truth. Qin Hui said: "Although it is not known whether Yue Fei's son, Yun 云 gave Zhang Xian 张宪 a letter, maybe it was so." (岳飞被秦桧等诬陷下狱, "韩世忠不平, 诣[秦]桧诘其实。桧曰: '飞子[岳]云与张宪书虽不明, 其事体莫须有(恐怕有, 也许有之意)。') Because of this "maybe" (莫须有), Yue Fei was declared guilty and died unjustly.

See *Changyong diangu cidian* 常用典故词典, ed., Yu Shi 于石, Wang Guanghan 王光汉 and Xu Chengzhi 徐成志 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1985), p. 20. Taken out of context, "moxuyou" means literally "no need to have". Later on, the term "moxuyou de zuiming" (莫须有的罪名) means "to be wrongly accused".

retreat into Xishan between 1927 and autumn 1931<sup>6</sup>, is an unusual Chinese novel which reflects his mental anguish.<sup>7</sup> Its unusualness extends over many aspects, such as the experimental style, especially the use of various narrative perspectives, and the mixture of dichotomizing ideas or qualities.

Crudely speaking, *The Life of Mr Maybe* is a Chinese equivalent of *Don Quixote* or *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*<sup>8</sup> in its self-consciousness: It flaunts its own condition of artifice and by doing so probes into the problematic relationship between real-seeming artifice and reality.

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See *Ciyuan* 辞源, Vol. 4 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), p. 2658. Edward Gunn translated "Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan" as "The biography of Mr. Neverwas" in his book, *Rewriting Chinese*, p. 128. However, the original meaning of the word in *Songshi* and Fei Ming's tone in presenting such a confusing (and confused) character, "Moxuyou xiansheng" seem to me to be more positive than the strongly negative-meaning English term, "Mr. Neverwas". Therefore, I stick to my own translation, "Mr Maybe".

<sup>5</sup>Chapters One to Eleven of *The Life of Mr Maybe* were first published in serial form in *Luotuocao* in 1930. Chapter Thirteen was first published independently entitled "Xingyunzhang" (行云章, "The Chapter of Floating Clouds") in *Qingnianjie* 青年界, Vol. 1, No. 4 (10 June 1931). ("Feng Wenbing zhuzuo nianbiao" in *Feng Wenbing yanjiu ziliao* omits this.) It is interesting that Fei Ming used the name, "The Chapter of Floating Clouds", since the word, "cloud" is often used to symbolize a wandering traveller, freedom or seclusion, as Sato Tamotsu points out in *Kanshi no imeji*, pp. 387-388. See also Jonathan Chaves, *Pilgrim of the Clouds*. Fei Ming might be indicating the life of Mr Maybe as hermitic. The book form of *The Life of Mr Maybe* which consists of Zhou Zuoren's preface, Fei Ming's preface and fifteen chapters was published in December 1932.

<sup>6</sup>It is likely that Fei Ming began writing the novel in spring 1930 when he planned to set up the magazine, *Camel Grass*. The novel begins with the narrator's words: "... because now that we are all starting *Camel Grass* I have to write something for it, and I thought it best to begin writing my *Life of Mr Maybe*". He writes in his essay, "Fangzhiji" that he finished the draft of *The Life of Mr Maybe* in autumn 1931. See Fei Ming, "Fangzhiji", *Xinyue yuekan*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (1 March 1933).

<sup>7</sup>The way in which Fei Ming's mental afflictions are reflected in the novel will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>8</sup>However, Bian Zhilin pointed out that Fei Ming had not read any novels by Laurence Sterne (1713-1768). See Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 6. On the other hand, Fei Ming had read *Don Quixote*. See Chapter One, p. 27 of this thesis.

In the novel, Fei Ming caricatures the 'hermitic' life of the hero, Mr Maybe (Moxuyou xiansheng 莫须有先生) in a small village in Xishan. He ridicules the 'scholarly gentleman' Mr Maybe and his illogical ideas: a miscellaneous mixture of Daoist, Buddhist and Confucian thought. In this respect, *The Life of Mr Maybe* has a mock-pastoral nature<sup>9</sup>, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The novel is intriguing as it is also indicative of a possible reason why Fei Ming became inactive as a fiction writer after its publication.

### The outline of the story

The novel is a complex mixture of light-hearted humour and sharp satire on the surface, and sadness and seriousness underneath. Fei Ming interweaves anguish, depression, ideals and philosophical thoughts on literature, life and society.

One day, the literary man, 'Mr Maybe', leaves central Peking and goes to the countryside (Chapter Two) and rents a room from a

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<sup>9</sup>In his book, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, William Empson introduces the idea of mock-pastoral and mock-heroic: "One cause of the range of *Don Quixote*, the skyline beyond the skyline of its irony, is that though mock-heroic it is straight pastoral; only at the second level, rather as the heroic becomes genuine, does the pastoral become mock. ... the book puzzles us between them; we cannot think one fatuous and not the other." See *Some Versions of Pastoral* (first published 1935; London: The Hogarth Press, 1986), pp. 198-199. However, this pattern of the relationship between 'pastoral' and 'heroic' suggested by Empson does not fit in *The Life of Mr Maybe* because the 'heroic' elements of *Don Quixote* and *The Life of Mr Maybe* are different. In Cervantes' novel, according to Empson's view, the 'heroic' lies in Quixote who thinks of himself as a chivalrous knight and imagines himself called upon to roam the world in search of adventures (while the 'pastoral' lies in the setting and other characters). On the other hand, in Fei Ming's novel, the double-sided 'heroic' exists in Mr Maybe: the Daoist 'heroic' ideal (= a hermit leading a secluded, or 'pastoral' life) and the Confucian 'heroic' ideal (= a gentleman rising in the 'world'), and therefore more complex. In other words, in the Chinese case, the 'pastoral' can also be 'heroic' at the same time. So, my term, "mock-pastoral" should be taken literally without Empson's connotation.

bannerman's (旗人) family (Chapter Three). There, he meets various local 'ordinary' people such as his landlady (房东太太), her husband Landlord Tan (谭老板), her little niece Yin'er (银儿), her neighbours Old Mrs Back-house (房后头大老太太), Mrs Three-footed-cat (三脚猫太太)<sup>10</sup> and others (Chapters Four, Five and Six). Old Mrs Back-house asks Mr Maybe to write a letter (Chapters Seven and Eight). Mr Maybe watches women in his neighbourhood quarrelling (Chapter Nine). He has a chat with local women in front of his landlady's house (Chapter Ten). He eats his landlady's local food (Chapter Eleven) and talks about the memory of his first love (Chapter Twelve). He goes for a walk (Chapter Thirteen) and talks with local women and recites his poem in front of them (Chapter Fourteen). He comes back, hears about Yin'er's death and bids farewell to his landlady (Chapter Fifteen). Very few events happen in the novel, and as the chapters develop, Fei Ming describes more and more in abstract words the thoughts of Mr Maybe. In Chapter Fifteen, Mr

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<sup>10</sup>According to *Cihai* and *Hanyu dacidian* 汉语大辞典, the Chinese word "three-footed-cat" ("sanjiaomao" 三脚猫) is a metaphor for someone who has only a superficial knowledge of various skills ("喻对各种技艺略知皮毛的人"). According to *Ciyuan* 辞源, "three-footed-cat" describes a matter which only has a surface and is useless ("形容事物徒有其表, 不中用"). For etymological information about the word, see Chen Si 陈思, "'Sanjiaomao'" "三脚猫", *Dushu* 读书, No. 2, 1988, p. 150. It is an interesting coincidence that this word also appears in Chapter Twenty Two of an English translation of *Don Quixote*: "Straighten that basin on your head and don't go looking for three feet on a cat." See *That Imaginative Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. Robinson Smith (London: George Routledge & Sons, Limited, 1910), p. 136. In this context, "looking for three feet on a cat" seems to mean 'ask for something impossible'. Supposing Fei Ming read *Don Quixote* in English translation (which is quite likely as Zhou Zuoren, in his essay "'Moxiazhuàn'" 《魔侠传》, sharply criticized the only Chinese translation, *Moxiazhuàn* and promoted instead an English translation), he found a very suitable name, "Mrs Three-footed-cat", for his funny, yet disagreeable character with a rather superficial and unreasonable disposition. See Zhou Zuoren, "'Moxiazhuàn'", *Ziji de yuandi* (First published 1923, rpt. Hunan: Yuelu shushe, 1987), pp. 71-75.

Maybe suddenly decides to leave, which finishes the novel with a sudden jolt.

It seems that Fei Ming intended to write *The Life of Mr Maybe* as freely as he could. He commented in his preface to *Selected Stories of Fei Ming* that *The Life of Mr Maybe* was inspired by the novel, *Don Quixote*.<sup>11</sup> In his essay, "Without Title" ("Wuti" 无题), he commented that he found *Don Quixote* very interesting as it was "a book which its author began writing without a thorough plan in mind" (无全书在胸而姑涉笔成书之书).<sup>12</sup> Fei Ming exercises this spontaneous spirit in his novel.<sup>13</sup>

As the title suggests, the novel is also a pseudo-biography. It is in fact, Fei Ming's autobiographical fiction disguised as a 'biography'. This facet will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **The novel of uncertainty**

Fei Ming sets up several layers of 'unreliability' to make his novel peculiar, baffling and fascinating.

First of all, as the name suggests, the identity of Mr Maybe is intentionally made ambiguous. The novel begins with the

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<sup>11</sup>Fei Ming, "Xu", *Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan*, p. 3. In Chapter Six of *The Life of Mr Maybe*, he describes a scene where Mr Maybe mentions Cervantes and holds a volume of *Don Quixote*. See Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932), pp. 55-56.

<sup>12</sup>Fei Ming, "Wuti" 无题, [first published in *Shijie ribao fukan*, *Mingzhu*, No. 17 (11 October 1936)], *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 359-360.

<sup>13</sup>It is quite possible that Fei Ming, like many authors of late Qing novels, did not plan the complete story before he began writing *The Life of Mr Maybe* whose chapters one to eleven were first published chapter by chapter in *Luotuocao* in 1930. The novel also finishes abruptly. Henry Y. H. Zhao suggests in his manuscript of "The Uneasy Narrator": "... a late Qing novel was most likely to have been published chapter by chapter before the author had even finished the whole book." (manuscript, p. 23.)

introduction of Mr Maybe in the conversation between the narratee<sup>14</sup> and the narrator:

'Mr Maybe', but there is no such person in the world -- isn't he merely a figment of your imagination? Exactly. Because I am bored, and because now that we are all starting *Camel Grass* I have to write something for it, and I thought it best to begin writing my *Life of Mr Maybe*. I have been thinking of writing a detailed biography for my Mr Maybe for a long time. Putting it this way just confuses people: Does this person really exist? It's better that you don't bother about too many things. If I say there is or there isn't, isn't it the same anyway? As long as I don't deceive you, that's enough. Actually, whether or not I deceive you is still my business, not yours.

莫须有先生，那么天下并没有这么个人，是你凭空杜撰的？可不是吗？我因为无聊，而且我们大家现在开办一个骆驼草，我得做文章，我想我最好是动手写我的莫须有先生传了。我好久就想替我的莫须有先生详详细细的做一个传。这一说把人糊涂了，果真有这么个人没有？你最好是不管许多，我说有说没有不是一样吗？只要我不骗你就是了。其实骗不骗也还是我的事，不干你事。<sup>15</sup>

This beginning part makes the reader assume that the narrator is Fei Ming's alter ego, since he is writing *The Life of Mr Maybe* for *Camel Grass*, and that *The Life of Mr Maybe* is a fiction. However, in Chapter Three, the narrator turns back to the 'biography' mode which the title suggests. He confirms the existence of Mr Maybe, but

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<sup>14</sup>"Narratee" is the one who is narrated to, as inscribed in the text. Gérard Genette explains that: "Like the narrator, the narratee is one of the elements in the narrating situation, and ... he does not merge a priori with the reader ... any more than the narrator necessarily merges with the author." See Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 259.

<sup>15</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan* (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1932), p. 1.

denies his own status as the 'genuine author'<sup>16</sup>, confessing that he is actually copying many parts from Mr Maybe's diary.<sup>17</sup>

The unreliable narrator further denies the credibility of what is written in *The Life of Mr Maybe*. In Chapter Three, he comments: "Just as years in the mountains are different from ours, *The Life of Mr Maybe* is not a faithful historical account" (山上的岁月同我们的不一样, 而莫须有先生传又不是信史). He attributes the reason for the randomness of *The Life of Mr Maybe* to Mr Maybe's muddled diary in which some pages are undated and many of them bear only numbers.<sup>18</sup> The narrator also occasionally rectifies what he has mentioned earlier. For example, in Chapter One, he says that Mr Maybe was renting a house with one and a half rooms (一间半房子)<sup>19</sup>, but in Chapter Five, he says:

.... three rooms, -- but didn't I say one and a half rooms at the beginning of Chapter One? That is probably because I was trying so hard to describe how uncomfortable Mr Maybe's house was, that I couldn't help exaggerating a bit. Actually it was three rooms ...

... 三间屋子, -- 开张第一回不是说一间半乎? 那大概是极力要形容莫须有先生之家并不舒服, 因而不免夸大一点, 其实是三间 ...<sup>20</sup>

In this way, Fei Ming reminds the reader of the author's power of invention in the 'quasi-historical' narrative framework of

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<sup>16</sup>The original text is "莫须有先生当然是有的, 不过那做传的人未必是我了。" ("There is of course Mr Maybe, but the the person who writes his biography is not necessarily me.") Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

'biography'<sup>21</sup>, and teases and betrays the reader's (assumably-existing) naive expectations of plausible 'historiography'.<sup>22</sup>

### The prismatic perspectives

Fei Ming observes the world he creates from the viewpoints of the characters and narratee as well as the narrator. It is as though he were playing a game with mirrors, or prisms. By a kind of process of refraction, he adds - or creates the illusion of adding - an extra dimension to the novel.

The narrator expresses his consciousness about his writing of the novel. For example, in Chapter One, he addresses 'Mr Editor':

Mr Maybe was made happy by the wind blowing, as happy 'even as a guard holding a whip'<sup>23</sup>, of being 'Poor without being

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<sup>21</sup>As pointed out in *Classical Chinese Fiction*, Sima Qian's *Shiji* is known for its quasi-historical narratives. Sima Qian used fictional sources, and some of his biographies of historical figures tended to fictionalize and dramatize historical events. A number of his biographies also inspired later fictional writings. See Winston L. Y. Yang, Peter Li and Nathan K. Mao, *Classical Chinese Fiction* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1978), p. 11.

<sup>22</sup>Andrew Plaks writes: "In any event, we may note that the implied narrators of official historiography convey a certain quality of omniscience, in the sense of *relative* infallibility, enforced by the inaccessibility of much of their source materials to the public and the quasi-religious weightiness of historical truth in the civilization. This omniscience is bounded in the other direction by the specific nature of the documentary sources: official papers, court diaries, necrologies, etc. ..." See Andrew H. Plaks, "Towards a Critical Theory of Chinese Narrative", *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays*, ed. Andrew H. Plaks (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 326. In *The Life of Mr Maybe*, Fei Ming makes sport of the reader by betraying his or her expectation of the narrator's omniscience completely.

<sup>23</sup>"Even as a guard holding a whip" is a citation from *Lunyu*, "di qi, Shuerpian, shi er" (论语, 第七, 述而篇, 十二, *The Analects*, Book VII, 12): "The Master said, 'If wealth were a permissible pursuit, I would be willing even to act as a guard holding a whip outside the market place. If it is not, I shall follow my own preferences.'" (子曰, 富而可求也, 虽执鞭之士, 吾亦为之, 如不可求, 从吾所好。) (Translated by D. C. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 87.)

arrogant, wealthy yet observant of the rites.'<sup>24</sup> He couldn't help smiling. Mr Editor, please note this is not to say that Mr Maybe memorised *The Four Books* wrongly. He thought 'Poor without being arrogant' was hard to come by, remembering the words of a hermit-gentleman: 'The literati put on airs of poverty, which is not really reasonable.' It is simply this meaning.

莫须有先生风吹得欢喜，乐得虽执鞭之士，贫而不骄，富而好礼，不禁莞尔了。编辑先生注意，这并不是莫须有先生把四书记错了，他以为『贫而不骄』是很难得的，记得一位隐君子的话，『文人摆穷架子，是不很知道理的，』便是这个意思。<sup>25</sup>

Here, the self-conscious narrator cannot resist inserting his own explanation about what he has just said; "Mr Editor, please note ... It is simply this meaning." This happens also in Chapter Twelve. After describing the behaviour of Mr Maybe and his landlady, the narrator inserts his own opinion about what he has said:

Mr Maybe was not at all conscious of the way he moved, standing up and then sitting down: this kind of trivial matter is not worth narrating at all, for it is easily understandable that he was simply not cold if he sat.

莫须有先生完全无意识作用，便起来，又坐下去，这些琐事也全不值得叙述，也容易明白，坐着不凉罢了。<sup>26</sup>

Although the narrator considers that "this kind of trivial matter is not worth narrating at all", he still has to say it as well as what he thinks of it. Similarly, in Chapter Fourteen, after a country woman's words, the intrusive narrator adds an annotation:

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<sup>24</sup>This alludes to *Lunyu*, "di yi, Xue'erpian, shiwu" (论语，第一，学而篇，十五，*The Analects*, Book 1, 15): [Zigong] said, "'Poor without being obsequious, wealthy without being arrogant.' What do you think of this saying?" The Master said, "That will do, but better still 'Poor yet delighting in the Way, wealthy yet observant of the rites'" (子贡曰，贫而无谄，富而无骄，何如，子曰，可也，未若贫而乐道，富而好礼者也). (Translated by D. C. Lau in *The Analects*, p. 61.)

<sup>25</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 118.

"... The more I think, the funnier I find it, and the angrier I feel! Humph!" Humph is a nasal sound for anger.

『... 我越想越好笑，越生气！哼！』哼是一个生气的鼻音。<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, the characters who are supposed to be in the fictional world appear to be conscious of the writing of the novel. For instance, in Chapter Six, Mr Maybe exceeds his role as the main character and meddles with the writing of the novel. In the dialogue between Mr Maybe and his landlady, Mr Maybe comments on her phrasing:

(Mr Maybe's landlady) "Mr Maybe, you can't blame me for this. Once I saw you, I forgot everything. I feel sorry for you: you are so young, endowed with the virtues of heaven and earth and all the ages, and so chaste!"

(Mr Maybe) "I don't know whether the meaning of your last word is good or bad,-- but, let's forget it! Let's not count the previous story, and consider it as a prologue. From today we'll work hard on telling the story. ..."

『莫须有先生，这个不能怪我，我一见了你我什么都忘记了，我可怜你，这么年青的，这么的德配天地道贯古今，这么的好贞操！』

『你最后一句意思是好是坏，不明白，——算了算了，以前的话都不算数，算是一个开场白，从今天起努力谈故事。...』<sup>28</sup>

Here, after giving his opinion about the expression which his landlady has just used, Mr Maybe further shows his consciousness about the influence he and other characters have in the making process of the story, by saying; "From today we'll work hard on telling the story."

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

Mr Maybe's landlady also appears to be concerned with the writing of the novel. For example, in Chapter Nine, in her conversation with Mr Maybe:

(Mr Maybe) "... You know, you know what! I might as well cry, wah, wah, wah ..."

(His landlady) "Don't be so tricky, how can you cry wah, wah, wah on the paper?"

『... 你知道，你知道什么！我不如我自己，自己哭一场，嗡，嗡，嗡 ...』

『你别这样调皮哭哪里就是纸上嗡嗡嗡呢？』<sup>29</sup>

Mr Maybe's landlady is clearly aware that her conversation with Mr Maybe is taking place on paper here.

Sometimes, Mr Maybe refers to what he has just said from the writer's viewpoint in his dialogue. For instance, in Chapter Seven, Mr Maybe says jokingly at the end of his long dialogue:

"... Haha, in one breath, I've just said several hundred words. If I took them along to the Commercial Press, they'd certainly be worth a few *mao*. So I haven't lost anything in any case."

『... 哈哈，这一口气说了好几百字，拿到商务印书馆去一定值得好几毛了，所以无论如何我没有吃亏。』<sup>30</sup>

Also, in Chapter Three, Mr Maybe discusses his way of expression in the middle of his dialogue:

"That old lady, what are you doing squatting there? If you are relieving yourself, you shouldn't be. Such a nice apricot grove, you should be leaving it on its own and not bothering it with worldly affairs. Besides, your kind of behaviour isn't very pleasant to see, and telling you off like this violates my art of

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

control. Once the words are out, I feel bad, so all I have to do is turn around and not look back. However, if you are writing, then naturally you ought to be careful. If by any chance you can't write well at this moment and cook something up spontaneously, and people are waiting for your draft to send to the press, this, you can deal with casually, and let it have merits as well as defects. In any case, people don't care about it anyway and this sort of thing would not be incompatible with the idea that 'The ancients value every moment.'<sup>31</sup> But one should not do things which are not very elegant where one thinks others can't see, for that is simply like having no respect for life ..."

『那一位老太婆，你蹬在那里干什么？如果是解溲，那是很不应该的，这么一个好杏林，总要让它寂寞一点总好，不必拿人世的事情来搅扰它，何况你这个举动不一定好看，就是我这样讲了你一顿，也很违反了我的节制之术了，一出口我就觉得不好，我只应该掉头而不顾。然而倘若是做文章，自然应该用心，万一一时写不好，信口胡诌，人家等待你的稿子付印，那又不妨随便对付一下，让它瑕瑜互见，反正是那么一回事，也并不就不合乎古人惜寸阴的那点意思。然而人总不可以在这自以为没有人看见的地方做不大雅的事，不是别的，仿佛对不起人生似的。...』<sup>32</sup>

Here, through Mr Maybe's hyperbolic 'philosophical' words, Fei Ming is making double jokes about his own behaviour as the author of the novel and Mr Maybe's in the fictional world. He is also doubly ridiculing Mr Maybe's affectations as a gentleman with a hermitic ideal. Firstly, he contrasts Mr Maybe's words: "Such a nice apricot grove, you should be leaving it on its own and not bothering it with worldly affairs" and the old lady's 'worldly' action. Secondly, he makes Mr Maybe quote a line from Tao Yuanming's poem in this ludicrous context.

Mr Maybe clearly expresses his consciousness of the existence of the author of the novel in Chapter Three, when, after being

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<sup>31</sup>'The ancients value every moment' (古人惜寸阴) is the line in "Zashi" (杂诗, "Miscellaneous Poems"), No. 5 by Tao Yuanming.

<sup>32</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 20.

addressed as 'Mr Maybe' for the first time by his landlady, he says to her:

"Aren't you the old lady who was told off by me just now? How can you blame me and not blame yourself? Have you come to take revenge on me? And how did you know I'm Mr Maybe? This must be the work of that fellow who is a writer: he must have exercised his skills. He knew that we were going to be like two nations at war and told her my name beforehand."

『你不是刚才被我讲了一顿的那个老太婆吗？你不怪你自己难道还怪我吗？你想来报仇吗？你怎么晓得我就是莫须有先生呢？这一定是那个做文章的家伙弄笔头，他晓得我们两国交兵，首先替我通了名姓。』<sup>33</sup>

The narrator and the characters sometimes show their fiction-making process. For example, in Chapter One:

Mr Maybe's walking stick fell to the ground with a thud, making the donkey stand still in fright and refuse to walk.

"Mr Maybe, don't be afraid. I'll pick it up for you."

"Let it be thrown away. I don't need such a thing!"

"This stick is pretty good. It'd be good for an old man to lean on, and it's made of Chinese prickly ash, bought on Miaofeng Hill, am I right?<sup>34</sup> How much did you spend?"

Now this biography has completely lost its credibility and Mr Maybe has become a real person in a real place. Mr Maybe burst in with:

"What Miaofeng Hill! Where is Miaofeng Hill? I don't know anything about it! A good friend of mine gave it to me!"

而砰的一声莫须有先生的拐棍落了，吓得驴子一站就站住了，不肯走了。

『莫须有先生，你不要怕，我替你拾起来。』

『扔了他算了，我不要这个东西！』

『这个棍儿不错，给老头儿拄了倒好，是花椒木的，妙峰山买回来的是不是？花几个铜子呢？』

这一来这个传记完全失了信用了，莫须有先生实人实地了，莫须有先生连忙一打岔：

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>34</sup>Miaofeng Hill (妙峰山) is one of the high hills in Xishan.

『什么妙峰山！妙峰山在哪里？我压根儿就不知道！我的一位好朋友送我的！』<sup>35</sup>

Here, the intrusive narrator, who comments; "Now this biography has ... burst in with", is showing his consciousness about the fictional framework. Mr Maybe also appears to be conscious of his own role as a character in the story, and is behaving like an actor who pretends not to understand the question he was just asked, responding with: "What Miaofeng Hill! ..." This is a scene which is like the two 'actors', Mr Maybe and an 'extra', 'performing' their roles in the 'play' "The Life of Mr Maybe".

In Chapter Twelve, Mr Maybe shows his concern about the effect he might be having on the development of the novel. He says to his landlady after being asked not to go to the central Peking by her:

"... All right, I had better not go. If by any chance I do stalk off, then still say I didn't go. Otherwise in less than a month, I'd be moving from the city to the country, from the country to the city, then this faithful historical account would never see an ending and others would have go on to another topic. What do you say? ..."

『... 好，我还是决定不去，万一扬长而去了，你也说没有去，不然不到一个月光景，城里乡下，乡下城里，那这部信史将真没有个完结的日子，让人家去做别的题目罢，你说是不是？...』<sup>36</sup>

The passage also brings to light the paradoxical situation where the "historical account", which should be about established facts in the past (in a traditional sense), is in the process of being made.

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<sup>35</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 117.

## Metafiction

Thus, the novel is constantly self-conscious about its artifice: from beginning to end there is a consistent effort to convey to us "a sense of the fictional world as an authorial construct set up against a background of literary tradition and convention."<sup>37</sup> In other words, the novel not only constructs a world of a fictional illusion but also deconstructs the illusion by making statements about the creation of the fiction through the words of the narrator, the characters and the naratee. In this sense, *The Life of Mr Maybe* is a fiction about fiction, that is, metafiction.<sup>38</sup>

'Metafiction', according to Patricia Waugh, is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about

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<sup>37</sup>Robert Alter's definition of "a fully self-conscious novel" in his book, *Partial Magic -- The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1975), p. xi reads: "from beginning to end, through the style, the handling of narrative viewpoint, the names and words imposed on the characters, the patterning of the narration, the nature of the characters and what befalls them, there is a consistent effort to convey to us a sense of the fictional world as an authorial construct set up against a background of literary tradition and convention."

<sup>38</sup>Y. H. Zhao describes the origin of metafiction in China and its rise since 1985 in his article, "The Rise of Metafiction in China", published in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Volume LV, Part 1, February 1992, pp. 90-99. He wrote: "The esoteric sixteenth-century novel *Supplementary chapters to the Journey to the West* (*Xiyou bu* 西游补) can be said to be the first Chinese metafictional novel. Apart from its parody of *The Journey to the West* (*Xiyou ji* 西游记), there are many passages that dramatize the idea of across-level control of meaning ... This sensitive understanding, however, could not have led directly to modern meta-sensibility, as its closeness to the modern idea of multi-level control is only seen in retrospect. Meta-sensibility in modern Chinese fiction had to wait until the mid-1980s when the intellectual and literary climate was ripe enough for such a development." (p. 96) Although Zhao does not mention *The Life of Mr Maybe* which was published in 1932, it is clearly a pioneering piece of modern Chinese metafiction.

the relationship between fiction and reality.<sup>39</sup> By accepting and flaunting the "fictional narrative/reality"<sup>40</sup> relationship, or to put it in another way, the "creation/description paradox"<sup>41</sup>, Metafiction explores the notion of 'alternative worlds' and how the construction of context is also the construction of different universes of discourse.<sup>42</sup> Waugh suggests that metafictional writers turn inwards to their own medium of expression, in order to examine the relationship between fictional form and social reality.<sup>43</sup>

In *The Life of Mr Maybe*, Fei Ming rejects the traditional authorial discourse, and instead playfully exploits the indeterminacy of discourse, and forces the reader to revise his or her preconceptions based on literary conventions. He makes sport of the reader again and again by raising the problem of the identity of Mr Maybe, the "author of 'The Life of Mr Maybe'" and the narrator.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984), p. 2. Waugh writes (p. 2) that the term 'metafiction' originated in an essay by the American critic and self-conscious novelist Willam H. Gass in his *Fiction and the Figures of Life* (New York, 1970).

<sup>40</sup>Wallace Martin's words in *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 179.

<sup>41</sup>Patricia Waugh's words in *Metafiction*, p. 88.

<sup>42</sup>Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction*, p. 90.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup>Fei Ming's way of manipulating Mr Maybe, the "author of 'The Life of Mr Maybe'" and the narrator is somewhat reminiscent of Tao Yuanming's way of using Body, Shadow and Soul in his poem. Pei-yi Wu calls Tao's use of them as "a divided view of the self" in his book, *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 17. Fei Ming also seems to entertain a divided view of himself in Mr Maybe, the "author of 'The Life of Mr Maybe'" and the narrator. In writing *The Life of Mr Maybe*, Fei Ming seems to be conscious of Tao's "Xing ying shen" (形影神, "Body, Shadow and Soul"). In Chapter Nine (p. 80), Mr Maybe says: "... Who are you? Can I be competing with my shadow in a heel-and-toe race? Questions and answers between Body and Shadow? ..." ( ... 你何人? 我难道是同影子竞走乎? 形影问答乎? ...) Also, Chapter

Fei Ming brings out an awareness of how the meanings and values of the fictional world have been constructed and how, therefore, they can be challenged or changed. In this light, *The Life of Mr Maybe* can be seen as an embodiment of Fei Ming's rebellious spirit. Characteristic of metafiction, the novel also draws the reader's attention much more to the world of actual writing rather than to that in the fictional frame. Because of this nature, this devastatingly 'playful' novel about the life of a 'hermit-intellectual', must be seen as reflecting Fei Ming's own thoughts about life and fiction-writing particularly vividly, much more than his other stories. These points will be discussed later towards the end of this chapter.

### **The experimental style**

The interplay between the narrated world (= story) and the narrating<sup>45</sup> world (= discourse) naturally results in the complexity of the narrative situation in the novel. For example, the narrator sometimes mixes the personal pronouns 'I' and 'he' as well as the actions of the two. In the early chapters, the narrator and Mr Maybe are clearly separate, but as the chapters develop, especially after

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Thirteen (p. 132), the narrator says: "... Body and Shadow compete..." (... 形与影竞走 ...)

<sup>45</sup>The term "narrating" is adopted from Gérard Genette's book, *Narrative Discourse*. Genette defines "narrating" as "the producing narrative action and, by extension, the whole of the real or fictional situation in which that action takes place". He also describes "the narrative" as "the narrated discourse". (According to Genette's translator, Jane E. Lewin, the gerund "narrating" is an English rendering of the French noun *narration*.) See Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay In Method*, translated by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, first published in French 1972, fourth printing in English 1990), pp. 27-29.

Chapter Seven, the narrative confusion becomes more frequent. For instance, in Chapter Eleven:

He also liked griddle-bread and certainly wanted to huddle round the stove and watch. They continued chatting and putting their heads together until 'Oh! It's ready, and it's hot', then taking it by the hand, began to eat it straight away. But I never thought that today at this time, there were still arrowheads to give me, so I announced my opinion --

他又喜欢烙饼，而且也一定要躬自围炉而看，且说话，且碰头，一直到哟，碰了我的手，接在手上就是吃了。然而想不到今天这么早晚儿还有茨菇给我，我就发表意见了——<sup>46</sup>

Here, the narrator begins to describe Mr Maybe's action and then in the next sentence (in the Chinese text), Mr Maybe becomes the narrator. This also causes a mingling of the narrating now and the narrated now<sup>47</sup>: the narrator is supposed to be describing a 'biography', but here the narrated object, Mr Maybe, also joins and says "today at this time ...". The reason for this might be explained by the narrator's excuse in Chapter Three, which is that he copied many parts from Mr Maybe's diary. However, as has been seen, the narrator in this novel is not reliable.

Some passages reveal the contradictory situation in which Mr Maybe is keeping his diary at the same time as the narrator recounts events. For example, in Chapter Ten, there is a scene in which Old Mrs Back-house walks off from Mr Maybe shouting boastfully about

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<sup>46</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 108. As for "luobing" 烙饼 (which is translated as "griddle-bread"), Aoki Masaru 青木正兒 gives a detailed academic account of how to make it and of the different variations found in various historical records in his essay, "Aipin no setsu" 餛飩の説, collected in his book, *Kakoku fūmi* 華国風味 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1984, third printing 1986), pp. 40-42.

<sup>47</sup>By "narrating now", I mean the present in discourse time, and by "narrated now", the present in story time.

her grandson. Immediately after her dialogue, the narrator repeats her exact words just as if he were reporting what Mr Maybe was writing in his diary:

(Old Mrs Back-house) "Mr Maybe, he also listens to what my daughter-in-law says!"

He also listens to what my daughter-in-law says. Mr Maybe thought: today's diary should stop here, I'll go in and read *Zhuangzi*. Meanwhile, the landlady had already come out ...

『莫须有先生，他也听媳妇的话！』

他也听媳妇的话，莫须有先生心想今天的日记就止于此，吾将进去读南华经矣。说话时房东太太却已出来 ...<sup>48</sup>

Here, the present in the narrating world and that in the narrated world are intermingled. Similarly, in this chapter, Fei Ming writes a passage in which Mr Maybe is trying to write down Mrs Three-footed cat's words as she speaks in his diary. In the passage, the present in story time and that in discourse time are mixed:

As soon as Mr Maybe saw Mrs Three-footed-cat laying down her load in the distance, he pulled today's diary out of his pocket.\*[i] Today, for sure, Mr Maybe will record quotations from Three-footed-cat\*[ii]; quickly, quickly -- I'm urging myself to be quick! Quickly take out the notebook!\*[iii] Slowly, slowly, quickly, quickly -- again, I'm telling you to be quick!.\*[iv]

莫须莫须有先生遥遥一见三脚猫太太卸了担子赶紧向腰包里掏天的日记来\*[i]来\*[i]，今天一定莫须有先生作三脚猫语录\*[ii]，快点快点，我催我自己怕自己快点！快点拿出本子来！\*[iii] 慢点慢点，快点快点，再是叫你快点！\*[iv]<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 94.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 98. The asterisks and numerals in parentheses are mine.

In this passage, Part [i] is obviously the narrator's narration. Part [ii] can be interpreted as either the narrator's internal analysis<sup>50</sup> of Mr Maybe's thought or Mr Maybe's direct speech, because in other parts of the novel, Mr Maybe sometimes calls himself 'Mr Maybe' where 'I' could replace it. Part [iii] is Mr Maybe's direct discourse. Part [iv] is ambiguous about who is "telling you (presumably Mr Maybe) to be quick". It can be considered as either the narrator or Mr Maybe. Here, the narrator could also be imitating the narratee's voice. Alternatively, "slowly, slowly" can be interpreted as Mr Maybe's direct discourse and "quickly, quickly -- again, I'm telling you to be quick!" as the narrator's voice addressing Mr Maybe, or vice versa. In this way, Mr Maybe's direct discourse and the narrator's narration are intricately fused.

Soon after this passage comes the following passage in which Fei Ming totally ignores the traditional narration:

She<sup>51</sup> probably also goes to school\*[i]: today is the beginning of the term and everyone's wearing new clothes\*[ii], Mum, I want to wear a new shirt too, so Mum gives me a new shirt to wear: today, New Year's Eve, Mum also wants me to go to fetch gruel: today, New Year's Eve, Mum tells me to wear a new cotton-padded jacket, so I wear a new cotton-padded jacket, and I like it very much, and I go into the street, and I go to the gruel kitchen to fetch gruel: today, New Year's Day, Mum tells me to bring it home to feed the pigs, but they won't let me in, so I come home crying\*[iii]: There's something Mrs Three-footed-cat doesn't understand: when they see in the gruel kitchen your daughter wearing a new cotton-padded jacket, they don't

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<sup>50</sup>'Internal analysis' is a narrator's account, in his or her own words, of a character's thoughts and impressions; a narrative report of thoughts and impressions in words that are recognizably the narrator's. See Chapter Five, footnote 60, p. 205 of this thesis.

<sup>51</sup>'She' refers to Mrs Three-footed-cat's daughter.

consider you poor and so won't let you in.\*[iv] This page is already full, and there's only room for one more sentence.\*[v] Atchoo! Mrs Three-footed-cat sneezed loudly.\*[vi] 她盖也上学\*[i], 今天开学人家都穿新衣\*[ii], 妈, 我也要穿新布衫儿, 妈就给新布衫儿我穿, 今天过年大年下妈也要我去打粥, 今天过年大年下妈叫我穿新棉袄, 我就穿新棉袄, 我就喜欢得很, 我就上街, 我就到粥厂里去打粥, 今天过年妈说拿回来给猪吃, 但人家不让我进去, 我就哭回来\*[iii], 三脚猫太太有所不知, 粥厂里看见你的女孩儿穿新棉袄不以你为贫民故不让你进去也。\*[iv] 这一叶纸已经填满了, 再只有一行的空白。\*[v] 哎喏! 三脚猫太太打一个大喷嚏。\*[vi]<sup>52</sup>

In this passage, Part [i] is the narrator's narration, no matter whether it is his own straight narration of the fact or his description of what Mr Maybe is writing in his notebook. Part [ii] is ambiguous whether it is the narration from the narrator's viewpoint or Mrs Three-footed-cat's daughter's viewpoint. However, it is probably more appropriate to consider it is from the latter's viewpoint. The reason is because the sentence-structure beginning "today, ..." is repeated afterwards in Part [iii]. Part [iii] is a description from Mrs Three-footed-cat's daughter's viewpoint about the events over a few days. Mrs Three-footed-cat's daughter's daily thoughts on the events of each day are linked together and described as if they were her interior monologue. Yet, it has the clear function of telling the reader what happened to her on each day like the descriptions in her diary.<sup>53</sup> Part [iv] is written from the viewpoint of either the narrator or Mr Maybe. The use of the pronoun 'you' tells us this part is addressed to Mrs Three-footed-cat. Part [v] can be taken to be Mr Maybe's free direct discourse. However, it could also be interpreted

<sup>52</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, pp. 99-100. The asterisks and numerals in parentheses are mine.

<sup>53</sup>'Interior monologue' is a discourse addressed to no one, a gratuitous verbal agitation without communicative aim. See Chapter Five, footnote 59, p. 204 of this thesis.

as the narrator's intrusion, as he often inserts his own self-conscious comments about his writing of the novel. Part [vi] returns to the narrated world.

It seems that the ambiguity in the above examples is mostly due to the upsetting of the hierarchy of narrative levels. Fei Ming repeatedly plays with narrative levels by putting narratee and story on the same level, or transforming a narrated object into a narrating agent and vice versa. Henry Zhao points out that "trespass of (narrative) stratification" has been a stock technique in Chinese drama for many centuries, and is still frequently used in popular theatrical performance today, such as in *xiangsheng* (相声, comic dialogue), where the actor often jumps out of his role and comments "from outside."<sup>54</sup> It is possible that Fei Ming was applying this technique found in Chinese drama to his novel, considering the fact that he expressed his appreciation of the 'free' expressiveness of traditional Chinese drama.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Zhao, "The Uneasy Narrator" (manuscript, p. 199). As for "narrative stratification", Zhao explains (p. 188): "Narrative stratification occurs when a character on one level becomes the narrator on another level. In other words, when one narrative level provides a narrator for another level." He also writes (p. 199): "What I suggest calling 'trespass of stratification' occurs when what should take place on one level breaks through the boundary between two levels to be relocated on another level ... Genette insists that the purpose of such trespasses is to produce the impression of absurdity or buffoonery."

<sup>55</sup> Fei Ming once wrote: "Chinese traditional stories and drama are in the style of a biography and are written from all angles. They are like Chinese traditional paintings. As long as the arrangements are all right, they are not concerned with the issue of a focused perspective. As I have been writing fiction, I have increasingly begun to feel that Chinese traditional stories and drama are rather more natural and sincere than foreign ones. The reason being that the Chinese method of expression is freer." (中国小说戏剧是列传体, 是从四方八面地写, 同中国画一样, 只要经营布置得好, 并不考虑到焦点透视的问题。我写小说, 愈到后来愈觉得中国小说戏剧比外国的更自然些, 更真实些, 原因就是中国的表现方法更自由些。) See Fei Ming's unpublished manuscript, quoted in Feng Jiannan, "Tan Fei Ming de xiaoshuo chuanguo", *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan*, No. 4, 1985, p. 146. Wayne Booth also gives the Chinese theatre as an example of

Some parts of the narrative in *The Life of Mr Maybe* also remind one of the rhetoric in Chinese vernacular fiction which developed from oral literature: for example, the storyteller addresses his audience, conducting a dialogue with them, or asking them questions. Thus, there are no rigid boundaries between different narrative levels. Also, the narrator's reflexive comments or remarks offering explanation and moral evaluation are common features in many kinds of oral narrative.<sup>56</sup> In fact, Fei Ming mingles in this novel traditional Chinese story-telling phrases such as 'huashuo' (话说, Well ...) and 'kanguan' (看官, Readers ...).

In many other parts of the novel, Fei Ming mixes various narrative styles which change kaleidoscopically and also violate traditional 'orthodox' narration. Consequently, the meanings of some passages in the novel tend to become many-sided and at times opaque.

Fei Ming sometimes inserts theatrical figures of speech to make Mr Maybe's actions comical. For example, in Chapter One, after Mr Maybe's dialogue, the narrator dramatizes Mr Maybe's action:

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putting an emphasis on unrealistic "alienation effects" (or, showing the power of artifice to keep the reader at a certain distance from reality). Booth explains, quoting from Bertolt Brecht's article "Chinese Acting": "In the Chinese theatre", Brecht says, 'the alienation effect is achieved in the following way. The Chinese performer does not act as if, in addition to the three walls around him, there were also a fourth wall. *He makes it clear that he knows he is being looked at ... The actor looks at himself.*" See Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (first published 1961, second edition, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1987), p. 122. Therefore it can also be said that the self-consciousness of the narrator, Mr Maybe and other characters in *The Life of Mr Maybe* is similar to that of a performer of the Chinese theatre.

<sup>56</sup>Patrick Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 20-21.

"I haven't seen my father and mother for a long long time. ... My hometown, I have totally forgotten you." At this, Mr Maybe, who was not a native of this place at all, became completely like a child: he could not help raising his sleeves so as not to let critics enjoy his tears, and cried just as if he were on the stage.

『我好久好久不见我的父和母呵。... 我的故乡呵，我完全把你忘记了。』于是莫须有先生完全不是此地人，完全是一个孩子了，不由得扬袖而不让批评家赏鉴眼泪，同戏台上的哭的样。<sup>57</sup>

The narrator's frolicsome depiction makes Mr Maybe look as if he was a cartoon figure. Similarly, in Chapter Fifteen, after the conversation between Mr Maybe's landlady and Mr Maybe, the narrator theatricalizes the scene suddenly:

(Mr Maybe's landlady) "M-M-Mr Maybe, my-my niece died early this morning!"

(Mr Maybe) "How-how come?"

(Mr Maybe's landlady) "She fell ill last night and in less than a day the child is gone!"

At this Mr Maybe jumped out from the back of the stage, panting, and turning somersaults randomly on the spot, then heard the drumming from the musicians, which was not at all for me, for university professors among the audience were booing: "You buffoon, don't waste our time. What we want to see is the artist Yang Xiaolou!" Readers, things in the world are not puzzling: every second is different. A word could make one go mad and a love letter could save one's life.

『莫—莫—莫须有先生，我—我的外甥女儿今天早晨死了！』

『这—这话怎么讲？』

『昨夜里得了病，不到一天孩子就丢了！』

于是莫须有先生这才从后台里头跳了出来，呼吸疾迫，立地乱翻几个筋斗云，而一听大擂大鼓全不为我响应，而台下的大学教授们叫倒好道，这个小丑你别耽误工夫，我们要看的是艺术家杨小楼！看官，世上的事毋乃不可解，这一刹那不是那一刹那矣，听一言而可以发狂，而一封情书又可以续命。<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 5.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 165-166. Yang Xiaolou (杨小楼, 1877-1938) was a well-known actor of Peking Opera, and was patronized by the Empress Dowager Ci Xi. For more about Yang's acrobatic skills, see Tao-Ching Hsü, *The Chinese Conception of the Theatre* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1985), p. 428.

Here, the narrator is preoccupied with making a clown of Mr Maybe and animating the situation by the very 'dramatic' description. He disregards the fact that in doing so, he has to digress completely from the main storyline. This is indeed reminiscent of the loosely controlled style of Chinese drama in general. Stephen West points out that in Chinese drama, "consistency of tone disappears through the constant interruption of plot by elements of spectacle".<sup>59</sup>

Again, in Chapter Seven, the narrator compares his style to elements of theatre in Mr Maybe's dialogue: "My Landlady, have you seen a play before? A letter on the stage is written so quickly; just one shake of the hand and it's finished. My style is more or less the same." (我的房东太太, 你看过戏没有? 戏台上的信真写得快, 一溜就写完了。我的手法也差不多。) <sup>60</sup>

### The use of allusions

The novel is full of quotations from and allusions to Chinese classical literature and also a few English words and sentences. Their most prominent function in the novel is to produce a comical effect. There seem to be two ways of doing this. One way is by drawing attention to the absurdity of Mr Maybe's personality and behaviour. Fei Ming often makes fun of Mr Maybe's character by putting

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<sup>59</sup>Stephen H. West, "Drama", *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. William H. Nienhauser, Jr., p. 24. Fei Ming pointed out the 'free' nature of Chinese traditional drama, as mentioned in footnote 55 above. West also states (p. 25): "Chinese drama was also extraordinarily free in its flow across space and time, and there are none of the severe restrictions of the nature of the three unities of the classical Western tradition. Therefore, to a person nurtured on the tightly controlled drama based on the Greek model, Chinese drama may seem distracted, loose, and uncontrolled to the point of haphazard presentation."

<sup>60</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 69.

abundant allusions and quotations into his mouth. For example, in Chapter Thirteen, when Mr Maybe is asked by a country woman to get her handkerchief which was blown away by wind, he says to her: "Is it that white stuff? 'Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend' -- Is it yours? ..." (『就是那个白色的东西吗? 草上之风必偃, -- 是你的吗? ...』)<sup>61</sup> Even during such an everyday occasion, Mr Maybe has to quote from a line from *The Analects*, which shows his ludicrously affected, pedantic character.<sup>62</sup> To convey Mr Maybe's intellectual airs, Fei Ming also occasionally makes him mingle in his conversations some English words such as 'pronunciation'<sup>63</sup>, 'sentimental'<sup>64</sup>, 'atmosphere'<sup>65</sup>, and a quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 134. The line in the single quotation marks is from *Lunyu*, "di shier, Yan Yuan pian", shijiu (论语, 第十二, 颜渊篇, 十九, *The Analects*, Book XII, 19). (The translation of the line is taken from D. C. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 116.)

<sup>62</sup>Other examples of Fei Ming's allusions, which stress Mr Maybe's pedantic character, can be found in Chapters Eleven, Twelve, Nine and Ten. In Chapter Eleven (p. 106), Mr Maybe says to his landlady: "Mr Maybe was born here, brought up here, and even now, 'in fallen States, hills and streams are found', 'spring grass shall be green next year' ..." (莫须有先生于斯, 长于斯, 至今国破山河在, 春草明年绿 ...) The line, 'in fallen States, hills and streams are found' (国破山河在) is a quotation from Du Fu's poem, "Looking at the Springtime" ("Chun wang" 春望). [The translation of the line is taken from Arthur Cooper, *Li Po and Tu Fu* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd: first published 1973, rpt. 1986), p. 171.] The line, 'spring grass shall be green next year' (春草明年绿) also seems to allude to a line, "Next year when spring grass becomes green" (明年春草绿) in Wang Wei's poem. In Chapter Twelve (p. 117), in his casual conversation with his landlady, Mr Maybe says, inserting a line (举头望明月) from Li Bai's *jueju* poem, "Quiet Night Thoughts" ("Jing ye si" 静夜思: "Look, holding my knees, I sit and 'lifting my head, I watch the bright moon' ..." (你看, 我抱膝而坐, 举头望明月...)) (The translation of the line in the single quotation marks is taken from Arthur Cooper, *Li Po and Tu Fu*, p.109.) Also, in Mr Maybe's words in Chapter Nine (p. 78 and p. 81) and his interior monologue in Chapter Ten (p. 88), *The Dream of Red Mansions* is alluded to.

<sup>63</sup>In Mr Maybe's words in Chapter Nine, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 75.

<sup>64</sup>In Mr Maybe's words in Chapter Twelve, *ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>65</sup>In Mr Maybe's words in Chapter Thirteen, *ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>66</sup>In Mr Maybe's words in Chapter Twelve (p. 123): "... I just cry out 'Daddy, Mummy' and that's all, -- 'The rest is silence.'" (『... 叫一声爸爸妈就算了, -- The

His allusions are also used to underline Mr Maybe's quixotic, hyper-romantic nature. For example, in Chapter Eleven, when Mr Maybe's landlady tries to wake up Mr Maybe, who is asleep bending over his desk:

"Mr Maybe, wake up."

"Wind and rain, dark as night, -- The cock crowed and would not stop. -- I who was given in a dream the brush of many colours -- Wish to write on petals a message to the clouds of morning."

"Hey, nicely sung."

『莫须有先生，醒来。』

『风雨如晦——鸡鸣不已——我是梦中传彩笔——欲书花叶寄朝云——』

『哎，唱得好听。』<sup>67</sup>

Here, the first half of Mr Maybe's singing words, "Wind and rain, dark as night, -- The cock crowed and would not stop" (风雨如晦——鸡鸣不已) is a citation from *The Book of Songs*.<sup>68</sup> The latter half is from Li Shangyin's poem, "Peonies" ("Mudan" 牡丹).<sup>69</sup> By making Mr Maybe start singing these poetic lines even in his half-dream, Fei Ming emphasizes the other-worldly nature of the literary lunatic, Mr Maybe.<sup>70</sup>

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rest is silence.』) Fei Ming also quoted the sentence, "The rest is silence" from the last part of *Hamlet* in his essay, "Shuomeng". In Chapter Thirteen (p. 138), Mr Maybe also uses the English word, "school-master".

<sup>67</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>68</sup>*Shijing*, "Guofeng, Zhenggeng, Fengyu" (诗经, 国风, 郑风, 风雨). The translation of the lines is taken from Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1937), p. 85.

<sup>69</sup>The translation of the lines is taken from A. C. Graham, *Poems of the Late T'ang* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1965), p. 165.

<sup>70</sup>The allusions here are so skillfully employed that they can also suggest several other meanings. Mr Maybe seems to be hinting that he had been having difficulty, like the time of wind and rain, in writing the letter before falling asleep, but got an idea in his dream and wishes to write it down. Another connotation is how airy-fairy *The Life of Mr Maybe* is: sleepy Mr

Again, in Chapter Thirteen, Mr Maybe's thought is described with a quotation of a line from Xie Lingyun's poem, "Up In the Lakeside Tower" ("Deng chishanglou" 登池上楼): "Oh, pretty girl, the music of God, the garden willows have changed into singing birds, all things are not within one's reach, and how can we parrot? ..." (可爱的女郎呵, 上帝的音乐呵, 园柳变鸣禽呵, 凡百事都不是人之所能为力呵, 我们那里能够学舌? ...) <sup>71</sup> The volley of 'arty' melodramatic phrases, which include the sudden quotation from the poem and 'big' words such as 'God' (上帝) and 'all things' (凡百事), stresses the excessively elated state of Mr Maybe's fancy-led mind. <sup>72</sup>

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Maybe's song about a dream and a wish "to write on petals a message to the clouds of morning" could indicate the unreliability of *The Life of Mr Maybe* which is supposed to be based upon his diary. It is also possible that Fei Ming is hiding his own literary aspirations in Mr Maybe's words: in spite of the darkness and chaos of the society, the imaginative 'I, who was given in a dream the brush of many colours', wishes to keep pursuing literary ideals even in a slight way. Another example of Fei Ming's caricaturing of the character of Mr Maybe can be found in Chapter Eight (p. 74). Mr Maybe talks about the episode of a butterfly's dream in *Zhuangzi* in his sleep: "... My mother says she misses me ... Father, don't blame me ... A man of virtue would not dream ... 'A butterfly flitting and fluttering around' ..." (... 我的母亲她说她想念我 ... 父亲你不要责备我 ... 至人无梦 ... 栩栩然胡蝶也 ...) The phrase in the single quotation marks is a quotation from the last part of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal" ("Qiwulun" 齐物论) of *Zhuangzi*. The translation of the phrase is taken from Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 49. Here, Mr Maybe, who is dreaming, says that "a man of virtue would not dream" and alludes to *Zhuangzi*'s idea of not being able to tell whether or not he is the butterfly in his dream. Fei Ming is making fun of Mr Maybe by suggesting that he is not "a man of virtue". He is also indicating that Mr Maybe is in the state of not being able to tell who he is. This suggestion is also telling about the nature of the novel itself.

<sup>71</sup> Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 141. The translation of the line; "The garden willows have changed into singing birds" (园柳变鸣禽) is taken from J. D. Frodsham, *The Murmuring Stream, Volume I* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967), p. 121.

<sup>72</sup> The quotation also seems to be used to suggest an impossible situation. Another example of Fei Ming's allusion, which is employed to illustrate Mr Maybe's ridiculously imaginative nature, can be found in Chapter Fifteen (p. 168). Mr Maybe says suddenly in the half-dreaming, half-mad state: "... the poem goes 'The kite flies up to Heaven; The fish leaps in its pool.' and look ..." (... 诗云鸢飞戾天, 鱼跃无渊, 你看 ...) The lines in the single quotation marks are

The other method of bringing out a comical effect is by creating a gap between the sonorous tone of a quotation from traditional literature and the casual situation to which the quotation is applied. An example of this can be found in Chapter Four, in the scene in which Mr Maybe's landlady first guides him to the house he is going to rent.

(Mr Maybe) "... I just ask you, how many years ago were these Chinese scholar trees at my door planted? Must be quite old."

(His landlady) "Your door! If that's your door, how come you don't know? I still haven't received your rent, but my house is already mortgaged by you!"

(Mr Maybe) "You've really a bit too much of that -- too much of money worshipping. From now on, I won't speak. It makes me feel rather lonely. -What I meant was I just admired the oldness of these four trees. -- I often think that people nowadays don't even think of planting a tree, with their narrow vision."

(His landlady) "Don't worry, it was just a momentary grumble of mine, please come in."

Saying this, she was almost appealing for aid and anxious that Mr Maybe might go missing hereafter: 'The man of old has already left, riding on a yellow crane'; then her house might have to be vacant again.

『... 我且问你，我的门口这几棵槐树栽了多少年呢？很不算少。』

『你的门口！你的门口你怎么不晓得呢？我还没有得你的祖钱我的房子就典给你了！』

『你也未免太那个了，太是拜金主义了。我以后总不说话。令我怪寂寞的。我的意思只不过是羡慕这四棵树不小，——我常想，今之人恐怕连栽一棵树的意思也没有了，目光如豆。』

『别及别及，是我一时发牢骚，你请进。』

说着她几乎要援之以手，怕莫须有先生从此杳然了，昔人已乘黄鹤去了，那她的房子可又要闲着了。<sup>73</sup>

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from *Shijing*, "Daya, Hanlu" (诗经, 大雅, 旱麓). The translation of the quotations is taken from Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs*, p. 213.

<sup>73</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, pp. 36-37.

The line; "The man of old has already left, riding on a yellow crane" (昔人已乘黄鹤去) is a citation of the line in Cui Hao's (崔颢, 704?-754) *lüshi* poem, "Yellow Crane Tower" ("Huanghelou" 黄鹤楼).<sup>74</sup> Fei Ming is cleverly applying the line to describe Mr Maybe's landlady's worry about him leaving her house behind because of his irritation at her sharp tongue. "The man of old" in this passage becomes a humorous way of referring to Mr Maybe who admires the old trees and complains about the "narrow vision" (目光如豆) of "people nowadays" (今之人)<sup>75</sup>, and a tongue-in-cheek reference to Daoist immortals.<sup>76</sup>

Also, in Chapter Fifteen, Fei Ming indicates the end of the novel in the scene in which Mr Maybe becomes more confused than ever. He makes the scene hilarious by quoting lines from Wang Wei's *jueju* poem, "Deer Enclosure" ("Lu Zhai" 鹿柴):

"Oh, I'll be faithful to my life: today I regard this life as having no intelligence."

Thereupon "Empty mountain, no man is seen. Only heard are echoes of men's talk."--

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<sup>74</sup>The translation of Cui Hao's line is taken from James J. Y. Liu, *The Interlingual Critic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 99.

<sup>75</sup>The passage also indicates Mr Maybe's critical view and dislike of "money worship", which seems to match Fei Ming's view expressed in his satirical short stories. Fei Ming, like Mr Maybe, also seems to have been very fond of trees. He expressed his admiration for Tao Yuanming's love of trees in his essay, "Tao Yuanming Loved Trees" ("Tao Yuanming ai shu" 陶渊明爱树), collected in *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 340-341.

<sup>76</sup>According to Satō Tamotsu, the image of a crane came to be associated closely with a Daoist immortal when Daoist thought became widespread at around the end of the Warring States to the Han Dynasty. See Satō, *Kanshi no imēji*, p. 362. There are also a few legends related to the origin of the name, "Yellow Crane Tower" such as that the immortal, Wang Zi'an 王子安 passed it by riding a yellow crane; a man called Fei Wenwei 费文伟 went there riding a crane; or an immortal flew to the heavens riding a yellow crane which had come out of the picture he drew for a tavern-owner whom he rewarded for his kindness and who later built a tower in his memory. In any case, "the man of old" in Cui Hao's poem suggests an immortal. See Fukazawa Kazuyuki 深澤一幸, *Kanshō Chūgoku no koten dai jūkyū kan Tōshi sanbyakushō* 鑑賞 中国の古典 第十九卷 唐诗三百首 (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1989), pp. 187-190.

"'The Life of Mr Maybe' is a day-to-day account, and can be burned."

Thereupon he turned around and said, still strongly:

"I still must wait for my landlady to come back and tell her."

And again said:

"Although I still haven't given up talking face to face, that was nothing but a total reaction, just like a space always has echoes, the world has no miracles."

『唉唉，余忠于生命，今日目此生命为无知也。』

于是又空山不见人但闻人语响——

『莫须有先生传是一笔流水账，可付丙。』

于是回首犹重道：

『我还得等我的房东太太回来告诉她一下。』

又道：

『我虽然还是不废见面说话，那完全是反应作用而已，正如同空间总有回声，天下并无奇迹。』<sup>77</sup>

Here, before the first remark, Mr Maybe was thinking about his writing, life and death in his frantic state of mind after hearing the news of the death of his landlady's young niece. Unable to find answers to his own philosophical questions, he comes to the modest conclusion which is revealed in a bombastic high-flown tone: "I regard this life as having no intelligence". Then, the narrator opportunistically brings Wang Wei's famous lines; "Empty mountain, no man is seen. Only heard are echoes of men's talk" (空山不见人但闻人语响)<sup>78</sup> into an unexpected context: he is making a joke out of the mismatch between the the highly poetic atmosphere of Wang's lines and the farcical situation to which they are applied. Fei Ming uses Wang's lines to 'mystify' the source of the remark; "'The Life of Mr Maybe' is a day-to-day account, and can be burned." (『莫须有先生传是一笔流水账，可付丙。』) He implies that this remark is like echoes of

<sup>77</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, pp. 171-172.

<sup>78</sup>The translation of the lines is taken from Pauline Yu, *The Poetry of Wang Wei*, P. 202.

human voices in Wang's lines. In "Deer Enclosure", as Pauline Yu suggests, the question, as to whether these are echoes of people who are actually present on the mountain at some distance or are simply memories in the poet's mind of conversations from some altogether different place and time, remains unclarified.<sup>79</sup> Fei Ming is insinuating such an idea and underlining Mr Maybe's fuzzy mind which cannot draw a clear line between what is actually happening and his fantasy. Then, Mr Maybe says in response to the 'echoes'; "I still must wait for my landlady to come back and tell her" (『我还得等我的房东太太回来告诉她一下』), which shows that Mr Maybe is temporarily stepping out of the fictional scene and becoming concerned with the making of the novel. Wang's line has also introduced a metafictional mixture of the narrated world and the narrating world. This is followed by Mr Maybe's self-conscious soliloquy which justifies as well as explains his odd and ridiculous (to objective eyes) act of talking to the 'echoes'. This last remark in the passage also connotes the Daoist-Chan Buddhist-inclined idealist (as opposed to materialist) conception that everything is a phantom of one's mind. However, such a view is tucked underneath the amusing surface of Mr Maybe's hyperbolical expression: "the world has no miracles" (天下并无奇迹).<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 187-188.

<sup>80</sup>Other examples of this kind of Fei Ming's use of allusions can be found in Chapters One, Ten, Twelve, Thirteen and Fifteen. In Chapter One (p. 3), the narrator describes Mr Maybe's address: "Later, I heard that he had a fixed address at which the shepherd boy pointed in the distance to 'The Hall of Three Scholartrees' ..." (后来听说他有一个固定的住所, 牧童遥指『三槐堂』...). It is a parody of the last line of Du Mu's pastoral poem, "Qingming" (清明): "Shepherd boy points to far Apricot Blossom Village" (牧童遥指杏花村). The translation of the line is taken from Arthur Cooper, *The Deep Woods' Business* (London:

Although the creation of comical elements is the main way in which Fei Ming's allusions are used in the novel, he also sometimes uses them as he does in *The Bridge*. For example, in Chapter Four, Mr Maybe says, quoting lines from Chen Zi'ang's (陈子昂, 661-702) poem, "Song on Youzhou Terrace" ("Deng Youzhou taige" 登幽州台歌): "He always has a feeling of 'I look back -- I do not see the ancients; I look ahead -- can't see the generations to come' ..." (他总有个前不见后不见来者之慨 ...) <sup>81</sup> In this way, Fei Ming borrows the Tang poetic lines to express an emotion economically. <sup>82</sup>

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Wellsweep Press, 1990), p. 63. This is an indication of Fei Ming's mock-pastoralism, which shall be discussed later in this chapter. In Chapter Ten (p. 87), the narrator introduces a Southern folk expression to be amusing: "The God of Heaven, the God of the Earth, there's a baby boy who cries at night in my house', this morning when I went into the street, I also read it aloud once, but I was ridiculous to have assumed that it was some sort of new slogan; I was again taken in by it." (天皇皇, 地皇皇, 我家有个夜啼郎, 今天早晨我上街我也念了它一遍, 我倒好笑我以为有什么新的标语, 我又被它骗了。) Here, the narrator is making a friendly joke using the common expression. Fei Ming also refers to this expression in the "Tea Shop" chapter of *The Bridge*. See Chapter Five, p. 229 of this thesis. In Chapter Twelve (p. 128), Fei Ming also parodies Shakespeare's famous line in *Hamlet*; "To be or not to be, that is the question". In Mr Maybe's story about meeting his old friend and Big Sister Yu (鱼大姐), there is a line: "To be or not to be, that is out of the question." Also, in Chapter Thirteen (p. 140), the narrator describes Mr Maybe's action using a line from *The Book of Songs* opportunistically: "This way Mr Maybe really came to want to know the details, and there must be a reason for it. As soon as he saw her, 'Lovely is this noble lady' ..." (这一来莫须有先生倒很想知道个仔细, 其中必有原故, 而一看, 窈窕淑女 ...) The line in the single quotation marks is from *Shijing*, "Guofeng, Zhounan, Guanju" (诗经, 国风, 周南, 关雎). The translation of the quotation is taken from Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs*, p. 81. Also, in Chapter Fifteen (p. 173), the narrator alludes to *The Journey to the West* (*Xiyouji* 西游记).

<sup>81</sup>"He" here is a general term. See Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 33. The translation of the lines is taken from Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of the Early T'ang*, p. 175.

<sup>82</sup>Another example of this can be found in Mr Maybe's words in Chapter Two (p. 16): "If she was a beautiful woman, she should be on the tallish side, then she would be suitable for 'walking on waves in small steps, with gauzy silk stockings stirring the dust and mist on the river' ..." (如果是一位女人的话, 总要长高一点才好, 那才合乎凌波微步, 罗袜生尘 ...) The line in the single quotation marks is from Cao Zhi's (曹植, 192-232) poem, "The Spirit of the Luo River" ("Luoshenfu" 洛神赋).

Another effect of the ostentatious use of literary allusions is that it reinforces the notion of fictionality, and makes the reader aware of fiction as a linguistic construction. According to Patricia Waugh, such explicit intertextual reminders are common in metafictional novels.<sup>83</sup> An example of this could be seen in Mr Maybe's words in his conversation with his landlady in Chapter Nine:

(Mr Maybe) "... this person's hair was golden: 'The setting sun has infinite beauty', standing at the Peach Blossom Spring and watching fallen blossom, it was really like facing towards the flowers detaining the setting sun ..."

(Mr Maybe's land lady) "Then she must be like a foreigner."

(Mr Maybe) "Ah, by now I am simply an abstract person: for everything I'm just having fun, making myself the subject of my writing, changing this and that, all depending on this hand" 『... 这人儿, 那发儿, 金黄之色, 夕阳无限好, 站在桃花源上看落英, 真是且向花间留晚照了...』

是且 『那她一定像一个外国人。』

『那』 『唉, 我这个人如今简直是个抽象的人, 凡百事都是自己闹得玩儿, 自己拿了自己做材料, 掉来掉去, 全凭一只手...』<sup>84</sup>

『唉, 我这个人如今简直是个抽象的人, 凡百事都是自己闹得玩儿, 自己拿了自己做材料, 掉来掉去, 全凭一只手...』<sup>84</sup>

Here, in his first remark, Mr Maybe is using allusions one after another without paying much attention to the content of what he has been saying: firstly, he quotes a line from Li Shangyin's poem, "Leyou Height" ("Leyouyuan" 乐游原)<sup>85</sup> and then alludes to Tao Yuanming's "Peach Blossom Spring".<sup>86</sup> Then he cooks up a poetic line in the style

<sup>83</sup>Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction*, pp. 112-113.

<sup>84</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 77.

<sup>85</sup>The English translation of the line is taken from James J. Y. Liu, *The Poetry of Li Shangyin* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 160.

<sup>86</sup>In "Taohuayuan ji", there is a line "The fragrant herbage was fresh and beautiful; fallen blossoms lay in profusion." (芳草鲜美, 落英缤纷。) The English translation is from A. R. Davis, *T'ao Yüan-ming: His Works And Their Meaning, Volume I*, p. 195.

of traditional poetry. Such a remark makes the reader aware of the discourse as word-play. This is further ensured by Mr Maybe's next remark in which he shows his self-consciousness about what he has said, and thus reminds the reader of the novel's fictionality, or the existing artifice.

In Chapter Thirteen, Fei Ming wrote, in the narrator's words: "... when necessary, I must always use it as an allusion, haha ..." (... 必要时我一定要当作典故用它一下, 哈哈 ...) <sup>87</sup> As metafiction has the nature of drawing one back to the 'frame' of fiction, it is possible to deduce another reason for Fei Ming's frequent use of allusions from this: that is, Fei Ming himself was 'flaunting' his knowledge to rebel against the 'norm' of traditional realistic novels. <sup>88</sup>

### The antithetical ideas

The novel is, both structurally and thematically, an unstable dialectic, working with a series of partly overlapping oppositions that might be conceptualised through such terms as fiction and reality, past and present, madness and sanity, subjectivity and objectivity,

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<sup>87</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 133.

<sup>88</sup>Fei Ming also seems to delight in using an unusual sign and playful ways of referring to characters in the novel. In Chapter Twelve (p. 126), Mr Maybe recounts a memory of meeting his old friend and Big Sister Yu: "Big Sister Yu loudly called my ambitious childhood name which I had forgotten long ago, but I nodded in response. What I called my old friend was by very classical two characters, which I replace with □. "Mr □, I've never expected today would bring me my fellow townsman. You must drink a lot for me.' ... 'Mr Maybe's-forgotten-name, whatever you like to talk about, Big Sister Yu will talk with you ...'" (鱼大姐□□声声叫我的一个有大志的小名, 我是早已记不得的了, 但我点头答应。叫我的老朋友则是很古典的两个字, 我以□代之。『□君, 想不到今天飞来了我的乡亲, 你也得多多的替我喝几杯。』...『莫须有先生忘记了的名字, 你喜欢谈什么鱼大姐谈给你听...』)。In this way, Fei Ming represents Mr Maybe's old friend's name with the square sign and Mr Maybe's childhood name as "Mr Maybe's-forgotten-name". This kind of wordplay also makes the novel amusing.

dream and reality, elegance and vulgarity. Because the dialectic is inherently unstable, no opposition can produce the resolution of a synthesis, and so each set of antitheses, whether embodied in the characters or in its narrative structure, tends towards the invention of further antitheses.<sup>89</sup>

The dichotomy of fiction and reality can be seen in the intersection of the fictional reality (the 'reality' in the narrated world) and the 'quasi-actual' reality (the 'reality' in the narrating world), caused by the precarious changes of points of view, as has been examined earlier in the section, 'The prismatic perspectives'.<sup>90</sup>

Such constant crossing between the narrated world and the narrating world induces the co-existence of past and present, or the narrated now and the narrating now. As the novel takes the form of 'biography', all the events involving Mr Maybe should be from 'the past' for the narrator (in the orthodox sense). However, Fei Ming weaves the characters' interior monologue ('the present' in story time, or 'the narrated now') into the narrator's internal analysis of the characters' thoughts ('the present' in discourse time, or 'the

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<sup>89</sup>It is possible to find a link between these ideas as embodied in *The Life of Mr Maybe* and the traditional Chinese tendency towards correlative thinking. Andrew Plaks suggests four formal characteristics distilled from the concept of dualism in Chinese thought: "bipolarity, ceaseless alteration, presence within absence and infinite overlapping" (in Plaks's words). According to Plaks, in the Chinese literary tradition, experience is apprehended in terms of paired concepts ranging from purely sensory qualities (hot and cold, light and dark, wet and dry) to abstractions such as true and false, life and death, or even being and non-being. In effect, each paired concept is treated as a continuum along which the qualities of experience are plotted in a process of ceaseless alteration, with the implication of presence within absence of the hypothetical poles. See Andrew H. Plaks, *Archetype and Allegory in the Hung-Lou-Meng* (Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, 1975), pp. 39-51.

<sup>90</sup>See pp. 270-276 of this chapter.

narrating now'), which results in a chaotic mixture of presentness, originally on two different time-scales; past and present.

Just as Cervantes created plump, squat, uneducated and practical Sancho Panza as a contrasting character to the tall, emaciated, fastidious, well-educated and idealistic Don Quixote to display completely different dimensions of their perceptions of the same issues in their dialogues<sup>91</sup>, Fei Ming arranges worldly, practical middle-aged country women, especially Mr Maybe's landlady, to contrast with well-educated, pedantic, idealistic Mr Maybe. Mr Maybe's landlady appears in Chapter Three and thereupon becomes the axis of the incidents which involve Mr Maybe.

In their conversations, Mr Maybe's landlady, the down-to-earth, 'sane' (most of the time) woman with common sense, often pours cold water over the self-obsessed, 'mad' man, Mr Maybe, who rambles on about his incoherent, airy-fairy ideas. For example, in Chapter Nine, Mr Maybe digresses on the problems of writing, mixing together the reality in the narrated world and that in the narrating world. This is followed by his landlady's response from her one-dimensional, straightforward point of view as a character in the novel:

(Mr Maybe) "... Ah, all these are really on the spot comments. Usually Mr Maybe's words are very cautious. Having listened to your teaching today, I shall always try to bear in mind that one tends to get carried away in writing. From now on, I must work hard especially on remaining calm."

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<sup>91</sup>Fei Ming commented on the importance of Sancho Panza for *Don Quixote*: "I think that not only a squire is necessary for a knight's adventure but also, without Sancho Panza, *Don Quixote* would not be a good novel." (我想, 不但骑士出游应该有一个 squire, 《吉珂德先生》没有山差邦札一定是写不好的。) The word 'squire' is in English in the original text. See Fei Ming, "Wuti", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 360.

(Mr Maybe's landlady) "I don't understand these words of yours. -- What's in your mind?"

『... 唉，这其实都是场面话，莫须有先生说话素来是非常检点的，听了你今天的教言，尤时时刻刻打算提醒，下笔最容易得意，以后应该格外朝平心静气方面做工夫。』

『你这一说我倒又不懂，——你有什么心事呢？』<sup>92</sup>

It is the nature of the relationship between Mr Maybe and his landlady that produces the antithesis of subjectivity and objectivity. In the novel, there are some scenes where the idealist Mr Maybe gives free rein to his subjective inner world, while the realist Mr Maybe's landlady makes practical, objective comments, as she watches him getting carried away. For example, at the beginning of Chapter Six:

Mr Maybe stepped up on to the two brick steps and 'in the distance saw the southern mountains'. He felt the artistic realm to be so vast and said with great joy:

"How lovely! I should have come here earlier. This is such a nice place. I shall embellish my mountain hut with the name 'Seeing the Mountains from the Latrine Studio'. It's a shame my handwriting is not very presentable! Of course, I don't have to write it now, as it's impressed on my mind.<sup>93</sup> I've spent about ten *kuai* having my 'Mr Maybe' seal carved, but even now I still haven't bought ink paste. So I can't use it, and besides, it's too big. In all my life, I care the least for recounting my story publicly, but am fond of keeping a diary. Yet, isn't my writing just the same as keeping a diary? Only I know it for sure. If those who appreciated art all through the ages had had such an adventurous skill as mine, there shouldn't have been anything called 'incomprehensible'."

"Mr Maybe, what are you saying, sitting in the latrine?"

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<sup>92</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>93</sup>The phrase "*xin xin xiang yin*" (心心相印) comes from the Chan Buddhist concept referring to transmitting the teachings of Buddha through minds without relying on words. See *Ciyuan*, Vol. 2, p. 1097. In the passage quoted in the text, Mr Maybe makes an associative leap from this phrase "*xin xin xiang yin*" to talking about his "seal" ("*xi*" 玺) and "ink paste" ("*yin se*" 印色) used for seals. Here, he is playing on the meaning of the character, "*yin*" (印) which also means a seal.

莫须有先生蹬在两块石砖之上，悠然见南山<sup>94</sup>，境界不胜其广，大喜道：

『好极了，我悔我来之晚矣，这个地方真不错。我就把我的这个山舍颜之曰茅司见山斋。可惜我的字写得不太像样儿，当然也不必就要写，心心相印，——我的莫须有先生之玺，花了十块左右请人刻了来，至今还没有买印色，也没有用处，太大了。我生平最不喜欢出告示，只喜欢做日记，我的文章可不就等于做日记吗？只有我自己最明白。如果历来赏鉴艺术的人都是同我有这副冒险本领，那也就没有什么叫做不明白。』

『莫须有先生，你有话坐在茅司里说什么呢？』<sup>95</sup>

Here, Mr Maybe's landlady is 'objectively' addressing Mr Maybe who is in a totally self-absorbed, 'subjective' frame of mind.

The dichotomy of dream and reality is found in Mr Maybe's behaviour. He is often to be found discussing his dream, falling asleep in the middle of an event and finding it hard to make a clear distinction between his dream and (the fictional) reality. At the beginning of Chapter Ten, the narration is made from Mr Maybe's viewpoint, in which he discusses his own dream as well as the dream of a girl who appeared in his dream:

So I had probably fallen asleep, as I was talking somewhat in my sleep ... But I could not throw away my good dreams, so I dreamed, dreamed, and when I didn't know that I was dreaming, I dreamed of her, of her, although she always kept the true features of a village girl ... once the elder sister saw her younger sister, she knew that she had something on her mind, so she nailed her:

"What are you thinking about?"

"Last night I had a dream."

"What did you dream about?"

"I dreamed about -- I won't tell you!"

"Even if you don't tell me, I already know it. -- I always tell you if there's something, but you never tell me anything!"

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<sup>94</sup>Quotation from Tao Yuanming's poem, "Drinking Wine" ("Yinjiu" 饮酒), No. 5. This is apparently another example of the use of allusion which Fei Ming used to produce a comical effect by pulling it into an unexpected context.

<sup>95</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 51.

In my dream, I too was longing to know about her dream. Only a dream, what is she so stingy about, being so reluctant to tell others?

于是我大概是睡着了，因为有点儿说梦语。...但我也不可丢了我的好梦，于是我就梦，梦，方其梦也不知其梦也，我梦见她，她，她虽然总是一个村姑娘的本来面目...姐姐一眼就看穿心事，钉问道：

『你想什么？』

『昨夜我做了一个梦。』

『梦见什么？』

『我梦——不告诉你！』

『你不说我已经知道，——我有话我总是告诉你，你有话你总不告诉我！』我在梦里也巴不得一下子知道。一个梦也吝啬什么呢，舍不得告诉人呢？<sup>96</sup>

Similarly, at the end of Chapter Twelve, Mr Maybe suddenly stops telling his old story about the girl he fancied in his hometown, and lowers his head, feeling sleepy. Soon afterwards, he looks up, when his interior monologue reads: "Where did my landlady go? How come you went in? But, what I've just said -- was I talking to you or was I dreaming? ..." ( 我的房主人那里去了? 怎么的你进去了, 那我刚才的话, 到底是同你说话, 还是自己做的梦呢? ...) <sup>97</sup> This tendency to fuse the fictional reality and dream escalates towards the end of the novel. For instance, in the last chapter, after Mr Maybe hears of Yin'er's death, he falls into a kind of trance and in his mind, the border between reality and dream blurs. Mr Maybe's interior monologue narrates: "Couldn't I just dehypnotize myself? Was it a daydream? Was I saying something in my sleep?" ( 怎么的我难道就自己催眠醒来? 做了一场梦话? 说了一些什么梦话? ) <sup>98</sup>

The dichotomy of elegance and vulgarity often brings a comical effect to the novel. Fei Ming describes Mr Maybe's 'serious' discussion about his 'high-brow' ideas about life, art, and society in

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., pp. 87-88.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

ridiculous, funny, worldly, coarse situations. For instance, as quoted earlier, Mr Maybe preaches to his landlady as she relieves herself in the garden (Chapter Three)<sup>99</sup>, and is inspired by a name for his hut from Tao Yuanming's poem, when watching the view from the latrine (Chapter Six).<sup>100</sup> Also, in Chapter Ten, Fei Ming employs this elegance-vulgarity contrast to describe a humorous scene:

Mr Maybe paced to and fro. He paced to the north pole, the Earth is round, Mr Maybe looked up and laughed, I'm a great disciple of Chan Buddhism! And I haven't used an exclamation mark. Then, he lowered his head, making mistakes in responding to people, when the man who came to the latrine every day to draw the night soil told him to make way and let him pass along the meandering footpath. Then, Mr Maybe's dog yapped and barked facing towards the one shouldering night-soil buckets, which frightened Mr Maybe out of his wits. Thereupon Mr Maybe hastened to come over and greeted the common people properly.

"So, ladies and gentlemen, you all like cooling off in the shade of these trees?"

莫须有先生来回踱步。踱到北极，地球是个圆的，莫须有先生又仰而大笑，我是一个禅宗大弟子！而我不用惊叹符号。而低头错应人天天来掏茅司的叫莫须有先生让开羊肠他要过路了。而莫须有先生之家犬狺狺而向背粪桶者迎吠，把莫须有先生乃吓糊涂了。于是莫须有先生赶紧过来同世人好生招呼了。

『列位都喜欢在这树阴凉下凉快一凉快？』<sup>101</sup>

Here, in the second and the third sentences in the Chinese text (which correspond to "He paced to the north pole ... used an exclamation mark" in the English translation), Fei Ming is driving his pen wildly, using a preposterous, grandiose expression to imply that

<sup>99</sup>See pp. 273-274 of this thesis.

<sup>100</sup>See pp. 300-301 of this thesis.

<sup>101</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 92.

Mr Maybe goes to the north pole all of a sudden.<sup>102</sup> He is again concentrating on presenting a temporal farce at the cost of losing consistency in the storyline. The part; "Mr Maybe paced to and fro. He paced to the north pole, the Earth is round", seems to suggest a circle, which symbolizes enlightenment in Chan Buddhism.<sup>103</sup> He further adds amusement to the scene by juxtaposing Mr Maybe, who 'announces' pompously that he is a "great disciple of Chan Buddhism!" as if he were suddenly enlightened, and the man who comes to draw night soil. Also, Fei Ming is making a joke by presenting a contradiction between the 'reality' in the fictional world and the 'reality' in the author's world: in contrast to Mr Maybe's claim in his free direct discourse; "And I haven't used an exclamation mark", Fei Ming used an exclamation mark to describe another free direct discourse of Mr Maybe's; "I'm a great disciple of Chan Buddhism!".<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, Mr Maybe's swift change from the state of being muddled ("*hutu*" 糊涂) by his dog's yapping at the person with night-soil buckets into his rather affected pose in addressing the "common people" ("*shiren*" 世人) as "ladies and gentlemen" ("*liwei*" 列位) brings humour to the scene. In this way, Fei Ming seems to be drawing attention to the remarkable gap

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<sup>102</sup>Fei Ming also sometimes uses the word, "the Earth" ("*diqu*" 地球) for an exaggeration to make a situation comical in the novel. See for example, Chapters Ten (p. 90) and Fifteen (p. 171). In his preface to *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, Bian Zhilin also points out Fei Ming's frequent use of words such as "universe" ("*yuzhou*" 宇宙), "world" ("*shijie*" 世界) and "throughout the world" ("*tianxia*" 天下). See Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 7.

<sup>103</sup>For the 'circle' in Zen Buddhism, see Ōmori Sōgen 大森曹玄, *Zen no hassō* 禅の発想 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1983), pp. 77-79.

<sup>104</sup>This is a typically metafictional joke which is akin to John Barth's (1930-) "Oh God comma I abhor self-consciousness" in his short story, "Title". (This title itself is metafictional.) See John Barth, "Title", *Lost in the Funhouse* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968), p. 113.

between Mr Maybe's self-image as an 'elegant', refined hermitic gentleman and the down-to-earth, 'practical' situation he finds himself in.

### **Autobiographical novel disguised as "biography"**

There are many similarities between Mr Maybe and Fei Ming. For example, Mr Maybe leaves central Peking and goes to live in a bannerman's village in Xishan. He has many scars on his neck<sup>105</sup> and wears glasses.<sup>106</sup> He is a Southerner<sup>107</sup> who speaks with a Hubei accent.<sup>108</sup> He is a literary man who used to like crossing bridges in his childhood.<sup>109</sup> His surname and age are suggested as Feng<sup>110</sup> and thirty<sup>111</sup> respectively by his landlady, although Mr Maybe denies this. All of these match Fei Ming's actual life at the time when the novel was written.

It is dangerous, of course, to take a character in a novel as being equal to the author. Indeed, the novel expects the reader's attempt to identify Mr Maybe as Fei Ming, and satirizes such an assumption. In other words, in this metafiction, Fei Ming pokes fun at the established preconception of readers of autobiographical novels that the author of the novel corresponds to the main character. In Chapter One, the narrator mentions that Mr Maybe has written his first story, in which the main character, Wang Daosheng (王道生),

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<sup>105</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 35.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

feels vexed with the people going to brothels. The narrator relates that he investigated whether Mr Maybe might be Wang Daosheng, because most of the great stories are autobiographical, but discovered that the two were different after all. The content of this first story by Mr Maybe also exactly matches that of Fei Ming's first published story, "Long Days". Thus, Fei Ming is actually mocking the reader who tries to identify Mr Maybe as Fei Ming.

However, in spite of this, it is still appropriate to assume that segments of Fei Ming himself are projected on to Mr Maybe. Considering Fei Ming's literary view, as influenced by *Symbols of Agony*, he must have buried his innermost thoughts and feelings under his exaggerated pose seemingly saying; "this is a fiction and artifice" in this metafiction. In this sense, the dichotomy of fiction and reality, discussed in the previous section, can in fact, be seen also in another aspect. Fei Ming projects his inner afflictions in his real life on to the fictional character, Mr Maybe, and sadistically makes a fool of his character, while at the same time caricaturing himself masochistically.<sup>112</sup>

Then, it seems that *The Life of Mr Maybe* can be described as an autobiographical novel disguised as a biography. In fact, in some ways, it seems to be a kind of parody of Tao Yuanming's "Biography of Mr Five Willows" ("Wuliu xiansheng zhuan" 五柳先生传). Details of Mr Maybe's identity, such as his name and address, are made ambiguous, and in Chapter Two, Mr Maybe says: "Then spread the

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<sup>112</sup>This structure is similar to that of *Don Quixote*. Manuel Durán suggests that Don Quixote is the projection of Cervantes and a kind of self-portrait. See Durán, *Cervantes* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), pp. 95-96.

news that it is five *li* to Mr Maybe's house and there are five big trees on the way. So, the trees become famous through the man: the man becomes famous through the trees: and he will have a well-deserved reputation." (『那么你就传出去，离莫须有先生家有五里，路边有五棵树，于是树以人传，人以树传，名不虚传。』)<sup>113</sup> Such an arrangement seems to parallel that of the "Biography of Mr Five Willows" which begins:

We do not know of what place the gentleman is a native, nor do we know his family or his courtesy-name. Around his house there are five willows and from these he took his literary name. Quiet and of few words, he does not desire glory or profit.<sup>114</sup>

先生不知何许人也，亦不详其姓字。宅边有五柳树，因以为号焉。闲静少言，不慕荣利。

As Pei-yi Wu suggests, "Biography of Mr Five Willows" is the first Chinese autobiography, although ostensibly it is a biography.<sup>115</sup> As for Tao Yuanming's use of the fanciful name, "Mr Five Willows", a critic, Wendy Larson describes it as the "mocking of the orthodox value of nomination as the means by which the individual is associated with official history".<sup>116</sup> She writes: "the name is empty,

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<sup>113</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 18.

<sup>114</sup>The translation is taken from A. R. Davis, *T'ao Yüan-ming -- His Works and Their Meaning*, Volume I, p. 208.

<sup>115</sup>Pei-yi Wu writes: "If autobiography is defined as a biography written by the subject himself, then [Tao Qian] (365-427) is the first Chinese autobiographer. Ostensibly he only wrote a biography, not an avowed autobiography. But that the subject of the *chuan*, a certain 'Master of Five Willows', was none other than [Tao] himself has never been doubted by critics or literary historians." See Pei-yi Wu, *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China*, p. 15. Stephen Owen also refers to Tao Yuanming as "the first great poetic autobiographer". See Stephen Owen, "The Self's Perfect Mirror: Poetry as Autobiography", *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice*, ed. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen, p. 78.

<sup>116</sup>Wendy Larson, *Literary Authority and the Modern Chinese Writer: Ambivalence and Autobiography* (Durham and London: Duke University press, 1991), p. 22.

tying him to phenomena that have no meaning in the established social world".<sup>117</sup> She also states: in this autobiography in which there is no awareness of time, place is denied, and name is rejected or perverted, Tao Yuanming is reclaiming the autonomy of self from the orthodoxy of place, political power, and social structure and positioning it in another context which eventually developed into an orthodoxy of its own.<sup>118</sup> She suggests that the context of referentiality of the impressionistic autobiography<sup>119</sup> such as Tao's should be regarded as a rejection of the orthodox Confucian tradition, but on the other it must also be viewed as the embracing of a well-established alternative in which the author takes on an acceptable role of litterateur, in the process establishing belles lettres in an oppositional relationship against history and officialdom.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>Ibid. Larson also gives Bai Juyi's "The Biography of Master Singing Drunk" ("Zuiyin xiansheng zhuan" 醉吟先生传) as another example of the impressionistic autobiography. She writes on the fanciful name, "Master Singing Drunk": "In replacing his socially sanctioned name, this name functions much as that of Tao Yuanming: it disassociates the author from his functional name and at the same time from his position in material society ... the severance of the name from its historical and functional sign effects the same result: nomination as a socially significant act is undermined, and the self is cut free of its specific relation with the society that determines signifying names and from the limitation to produce meaning through these names alone." See *ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>119</sup>Larson divides pre-modern "autobiographies" into the "circumstantial texts" and the "impressionistic autobiographies", depending on the type of references used to define the self of the author. She explains that in the circumstantial texts, the "context of referentiality" was the socio-material world of kinship, ancestry, "real" time and place, proper names, and official positions. On the other hand, she states that the impressionistic autobiographies "suppressed reference to kinship, 'real' time and place, proper name, and official position and substituted reference to aspects of the life of a detached literatus." See *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., p. 29. Pei-yi Wu points out that "Biography of Mr Five Willows" owes much in tone, content, and format to the *Gaoshizhuan* 高士传 (*Biographies of Lofty Recluses*), a work attributed to Huangfu Mi 皇甫谧 of the third century. See Pei-yi Wu, *Confucian's Progress*, p. 16. Obi Kōichi also points out that Chinese biographies with obscure referentiality in the narrative style of "we

With the wilfully indefinite name, "Mr Maybe" and the (seemingly<sup>121</sup>) elusive place, Fei Ming indicates that *The Life of Mr Maybe* imitates the format of 'autobiography disguised as biography' in the Daoist literary tradition.

### Fei Ming's mock-pastoralism

Tao Yuanming mocks orthodox Confucian values and depicts his alter ego, Mr Five Willows's life as a hermit. On the other hand, Fei Ming, in his burlesque, mocks his alter ego, Mr Maybe and depicts his life as a pseudo-hermit.

In Chapter Fifteen, just before Mr Maybe bids farewell to his landlady, there is a scene in which he becomes frantic in his room full of his books of hermits (隱士之書).<sup>122</sup> Fei Ming teases Mr Maybe's 'discreet' hermitage in Chapter Eleven, in the conversation between Mr Maybe and his landlady which takes place immediately after Mr Maybe points to Peking on the map:

(Mr Maybe's landlady) "West of here is probably our Mentou Village."

(Mr Maybe) "It's the place for Mr Maybe's seclusion: as you aren't careful, you've disclosed it so casually!"

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do not know of what place the gentleman is a native" can also be found in such classical biographies of hermits as *Houhanshu*, "yiminzhuan" 后汉书, 逸民传, *Jinshu*, yinyizhuan 晋书, 隐逸传, and *Nanshi*, yinyizhuan 南史, 隐逸传. See Obi, *Chugoku no inton shiso*, p. 51 and p. 127.

<sup>121</sup>Fei Ming suggests the setting as Xishan several times in the novel. For instance, in the passage in Chapter One quoted earlier in this chapter, pp. 275-276 of this thesis. Also in the passage in Chapter Eleven, to be quoted later in this thesis (pp. 309-310).

<sup>122</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 170. This structure is similar to that of *Don Quixote*, which parodies romances of chivalry and whose hero was surrounded by romances of chivalry when he was at home.

(Mr Maybe's landlady) "Surely you can't blame me, it's all your own fault. You aren't prepared to tell people even the name of the place. I am suffering there just like you, but you pretend to be at a loss."

『这儿西上大概就是咱们门头村。』

『莫须有先生遁世不见之所，不留意你就随便走露出去了！』

『可见不能怪人家，都是你自己的不是，连个地名都不肯告诉人，人家也同你一样在那里受苦。有心没有主意。』<sup>123</sup>

The first remark by Mr Maybe's landlady reveals a real place name in Xishan. The passage contains a satire on the reticence about place in the traditional Daoist 'autobiography disguised as biography' format of writing, such as "Biography of Mr Five Willows". Besides, when the novel was being written, Fei Ming himself was often in Xishan, leading a 'hermitic' life. To the reader who knows such biographical information, the passage also carries Fei Ming's self-mocking joke.

In Chapter Twelve, Fei Ming describes Mr Maybe's 'heroic' spirit as a 'hermit' with a sarcastic tone:

'The Peach Blossom Spring' it is supposed to be, but why is it nothing but a den of hunger and cold, no matter how hard I look? If that's the case, I won't be interested at all, it's just boring. All right, I won't care, I will brag: from tomorrow, I will be determined to practise Buddhism and help the masses. I won't stop till my aim is achieved. I will try gradually by putting myself on a cheap diet for a start.

好一个桃花源，看来看去怎么正是一个饥寒之窟呢？那我将一点意思也没有，无聊得很。好了，我且不管，我且说一句大话，从明天起我就立志，立志修行，普度众生，誓不达到目的不止，且慢慢先从自己用点苦茶饭试一试。<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

In the first sentence, Fei Ming throws a doubt at the famous utopian pastoral ideal of 'The Peach Blossom Spring'. The second sentence describes Mr Maybe's view that he is not at all interested in "a den of hunger and cold". It caricatures Mr Maybe's hedonistic character, which is the opposite of the traditional archetypal hermit, Mr Five Willows. The phrases; "All right, I won't care, I will brag" (好了, 我且不管, 我且说一句大话) in the third sentence also shows the dubious, haphazard nature of Mr Maybe's aspiration to be a Daoist/Buddhist 'hermit'.

Fei Ming plays a further joke at Mr Maybe's vacillation between being a recluse and a 'gentleman who enters the world'. In Chapter Six, in his conversation with his landlady, Mr Maybe says:

"I just invite the wise to offer their criticisms: I often pace up and down alone as if I were an unrivalled beauty, and I would always be melancholic about losing a mirror. My inability to dispel various feelings would be about as much as my ability to excuse myself for losing the world, because I don't have discipline. Originally, I was thinking of letting down my hair and coming to live in the mountains. I swear that the face I see in the glass in the niche for a statue of Buddha is none other than my handsome rosy-cheeked face. I have not yet attained that 'integrity of later years'. Nuns would think of worldly things. The desire for taking good care of one's appearance proves that a Buddhist is a gentleman who enters the world. "One cannot associate with birds and beasts. Am I not a member of this human race?"<sup>125</sup> The first step should still be love."

『我且就正于高明, 我常独自徘徊, 我如是一绝世佳人, 总惆怅于丧失一面镜子, 其不能遣诸怀盖不下于丧天下之可原谅, 因为我不知道规矩。原来那时我是打算披发入山也。 我其以佛龕的玻璃证明我的红颜乎。我其晚节不

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<sup>125</sup>The citation is from *Lunyu*, "di shiba, Weizi pian, liu" (论语, 第十八, 微子篇, 六, *The Analects*, Book XVIII, 6). The translation is taken from D. C. Lau, *The Analects*, p. 150.

终乎。尼姑思凡乎。恹恹于打扮之情，则修行人正是一个入世之士也。鸟兽不可与同群也，吾非斯人之徒与而谁与。第一步还是恋爱的好。』<sup>126</sup>

Here, Mr Maybe first regrettably expresses his problem with his own narcissistic inclination comparing himself to "an unrivalled beauty". It is also suggestive of Fei Ming's own inclination towards embellishing his pastoral stories with a somewhat 'lingering', melancholic atmosphere.<sup>127</sup> He adds an excuse for his fondness for mirrors by saying that he was thinking of letting down his hair, like (the stereotyped image of) a hermit, to go to live in the mountains. He still boasts about his appearance which in his view, would make nuns fancy him in the hermitage. Perhaps feeling guilty of being self-obsessed without 'discipline' while living in hermitage, he attempts to justify such self-obsession as the sign of his interest in the alternative Confucian orthodoxy of 'entering the world'. He opportunistically quotes from *The Analects* Confucius' words which oppose the two hermits who suggested that Confucius' disciple<sup>128</sup> should 'follow the one who runs away from the world'. In doing so, Mr Maybe feigns the Confucian spirit, and promotes 'love'. In this way, Mr Maybe wavers between the ideas of 'standing aloof from worldly affairs' and of 'rising in the world'. Mr Maybe seems to be remorseful at his own self-absorption and avoiding the 'world'. Fei Ming is making fun of Mr Maybe's desperate attempt to keep the

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<sup>126</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 58. Consulting the 1988 edition of *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan* which is collected in *Fei Ming xuanji* (p. 395), I added the character, "步" which is dropped in the 1932 edition.

<sup>127</sup>Fei Ming also wrote a melancholic poem, entitled "The Dressing-table" ("Zhuangtai" 妆台), using the images of a mirror and a beauty, on 16 May 1931. See Chapter Two, p. 95, footnote 35 of this thesis.

<sup>128</sup>This disciple is Zilu 子路.

face of a Chinese 'gentleman'. Mr Maybe uses grave-sounding, philosophical, classical-style phrases, and applies such convenient excuses and a wobbly logic to justify his self-indulgent behaviour.

Caught in the Chinese intellectual's traditional dilemma of 'rising in the world' and 'standing aloof from the worldly affairs', Mr Maybe expresses his agony, contemplating 'what he is' and 'what he should be doing' in Chapter Fourteen:

... Good men just go forward and seek reform and happiness, while I secretly sew the net of everything in life into myself. I think the intricacy of the net is impressive and think I can practice reaching nirvana by doing so ...

... 好男儿就冲上前去, 求改革, 求幸福, 而我却偷偷的把一切之网自缀在身上, 也就错综得很可观, 还能够从中练习得一个涅槃 ...<sup>129</sup>

These words are also suggestive of Fei Ming's ideas as he was becoming increasingly interested in Buddhism and absorbed in 'practising reaching nirvana' in his real life in the 1930s. The passage seems to indicate Mr Maybe's (and perhaps also Fei Ming's) sense of remorse about not 'going forward' to reform 'the world' instead of withdrawing into 'secret' hermitage.

Fei Ming also seems to be ironical about the leitmotif of his pastoral stories. The narrator's words at the beginning of Chapter Four read:

Mr Maybe followed his landlady to the house where he was going to live for a long time. Although he didn't know why, he felt bad as if he was playing a joke on himself. The setting sun above Xishan, (I) salute you. However, he (the sun) wouldn't

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<sup>129</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 151.

play games but would tell you (Mr Maybe) that he still has to rise from the east tomorrow.<sup>130</sup>

莫须有先生接着就跟了他的房东太太上他将要久住的家了，心里怪难受的，不知为什么，好像自己同自己开了一阵玩笑，而西上的落日，同你打一个招呼，他一点也不肯游戏，告诉你他明天还得从东方起来。<sup>131</sup>

This passage contrasts with the passage in the "Dusk" chapter of *The Bridge*, already quoted earlier in Chapter Three of this thesis to illustrate the idea of passing time in Fei Ming's pastoral stories: "... Now deep in thought, enjoying the beauty of this dusk ... A change of mind is passing you by without a word or sign, just like time elapsing."<sup>132</sup> It seems that Fei Ming is making a parody of the dusk scenes which he often employs to add melancholic atmosphere to his pastoral stories. In *The Life of Mr Maybe*, he seems to be trying to show the viewpoints which are contrasting to those expressed in more serious tone in his pastoral stories. For example, soon after these words of the narrator in Chapter Four, Mr Maybe says to his landlady:

"Ah, Landlady, this object the human being really is a bit too arrogant: he doesn't think he is ridiculous in fact, and at dusk, reaching a dead end, he always has a feeling of 'I look back -- I do not see the ancients; I look ahead -- can't see the generations to come'. He is capable of being independent on his own, but sadness comes from it."

『唉，房东太太，人这个东西很有点儿自大，他不以为他可笑得很，到了日暮途穷的时候，他总有个前不见古人后不见来者之概，他能够孑然独立，悲』

<sup>130</sup>The words in the parentheses are added by me for the sake of clarity.

<sup>131</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 33.

<sup>132</sup>See Chapter Three, p. 136 of this thesis.

<sup>133</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 33.

The passage contains a quotation from Chen Zi'ang's poem, which has been discussed earlier.<sup>134</sup> Mr Maybe is being cynical about the sentimental feelings at dusk which were expressed in classical literature and have been shared with people since ancient times. In this way, Fei Ming is presenting a dry, critical viewpoint about people's becoming emotional at dusk, and is also indirectly mocking his own frequent use of dusk images in his pastoral stories.

So, the novel is 'mock-pastoral' in three ways. First, it parodies the format of impressionistic autobiography disguised as biography, employed by the traditional pastoralists such as Tao Yuanming. Secondly, it mocks the idea of the "Peach Blossom Spring" and casts some doubts at the 'appearances' as a 'resolute' hermit, which can be found, for example in Tao's works, by depicting Mr Maybe's constant agitation between the traditional Chinese intellectual's Confucian and Daoist ideals. Thirdly, it comprises some parts which ironically suggest an idea that confronts and opposes the dusk leitmotif in Fei Ming's own pastoral stories.

### **Dissatisfaction with society**

Fei Ming expresses the agony of his dissatisfaction with society, and weaves into the novel a philosophical discussion on the meaning of life.

In Chapter Two, just before Mr Maybe leaves for the countryside, the chaotic condition of society is described:

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<sup>134</sup>See p. 295 of this thesis.

Outside the city gate it was seething with people leading camels or pushing dung-carts as well as those who had nothing better to do than act as police with truncheons in their hands. There also came a big herd of pigs whipped forward, making everyone dusty. As for Mr Maybe, he moved out of the way in a hurry and stood almost aloof, stretching his neck out. However, in this vast greyness, he could not possibly stick out his head, and stood there, thin and lonely. He really was a child of the earth.

城门之外，汹汹沸沸，牵骆驼的，推粪车的，没有干什么而拿了棍子当警察的，而又偏偏来了一条鞭子赶得一大猪群头头是猪，人人是土，莫须有先生呢，赶忙躲开一点，几乎近于独立，脖子伸得很长，但这么一个大灰色之中无论如何伸不出头来，瘦伶仃的，立在那儿真真是一个地之子了。<sup>135</sup>

In the same chapter, Fei Ming describes Mr Maybe's troubled mind in a monologue uttered as he observes the crowd in the turmoil of civil wars:

"All of them are soldiers enlisted to go to Shanxi to fight. Why are there so many? Cart after cart, you don't even have a seat. How timid and weak-willed your eyes look! Oh, Father and Mother, God and People, I cannot understand what causes you to go to this extreme. When I went out of the city gate just now, I saw a man driving a herd of pigs but they were unable to make their way into the city. They covered my face with dust, which was extremely unpleasant. Now you pass in front of me, Brothers. Oh, God, Mr Maybe has committed a sin, and his heart is aching. These are all his compatriots. His mind is full of those pigs ..."

『这都是招到山西去打仗的兵呵。怎么这么多呵。一辆又一辆，你们连一个座位都没有呵。你们的眼光多么怯弱呵。父兮母兮，天乎人乎，吾思而使尔至于此极者而不可得也。刚才我一出城门的时候，看见一个人赶一个猪群，打也打不进城，钻也无处钻，弄得我满脸是土，不舒服极了，现在你们又在我的面前而过呵，弟兄们呵。唉，上帝，莫须有先生罪过了，他的心痛楚，这都是他的同胞呵，他的意思里充满了那一些猪呵。...』<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., p. 13. This scene is quite contrary to the famous description of an utopian community in *Daodejing* (道德经), Book Two, LXXX: "Ensure that even though the people have tools of war for a troop or a battalion they will not use them; and also that they will be reluctant to move to distant places because they look on death as no light matter. Even when they have ships and carts, they will have no use for them; and even when they have armour and

At the end of this monologue, Mr Maybe comes to the conclusion that 'strife for life' (求生) is the reason for war and realises the difficulty in 'the path between life and death' (为难的就在这生与死间的一段路).<sup>137</sup> These passages seem to convey Fei Ming's sense of alienation among the masses in the 'vast greyness' of Chinese society of the late 1920s. It is also possible to detect in Mr Maybe's words a similarity with the Buddhist assumption that suffering is an integral part of all transitory existence.

In Chapter Four, Fei Ming's view of this era shows through Mr Maybe's following comments on Wuchang:

Many boyhood friends of mine are undergoing life-and-death struggles and they are all victims of this era. So, now, I simply don't know what I should make of that town in my memory: it's a slaughterhouse and a market: everyone would look so familiar.

我有许多少年朋友都在那里生生死死，都是这个时代的牺牲者，所以，那个城，在我的记忆里简直不晓得混成一个什么东西了，一个屠场，一个市场，一个个的人都是那么怪面熟。<sup>138</sup>

Having studied and taught in Wuchang, Fei Ming obviously had some attachment to the town. After he moved to Peking, on 10 October 1926 the Wuchang garrison surrendered and Hubei was largely under the control of the Nationalist army. In Peking, Fei Ming had many reasons to feel anxious personally. He expressed his concern for his elder brother who was working as a primary school teacher in

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weapons, they will have no occasion to make a show of them ..." The translation is taken from *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching*, trans. D. C. Lau, p. 142.

<sup>137</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 13.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

Wuchang in his diary dated 11 October 1926.<sup>139</sup> Also in June 1927, his cousin was killed by the Guomindang in his hometown.<sup>140</sup>

Perhaps reflecting Fei Ming's distress, Mr Maybe says in Chapter Eight; "... life in this world makes me fatigued in the extreme." (... 世间的日子把我过得疲乏之至)<sup>141</sup>, and in Chapter Fifteen, he soliloquizes:

I only wish that this society of ours was a rational one in which people would not trample on each other and would behave much more decently than any other animals ... oh, life's best spirit, I'm afraid I won't be able to keep it up very long. When I get up tomorrow morning, I will be sulky again. When I see people, I will hate them again and think; 'why are you all so stupid?'

我只愿我们这个社会是一个合理的社会，人都不自相作践，比凡百动物好看得多 ... 人生最好的一副精神呵，我只怕我保持得不长久，明天早晨起来又是烦闷，见了人又讨厌人家，你们为什么那样的愚蠢呢？<sup>142</sup>

These words of Mr Maybe are indeed reminiscent of Fei Ming's pessimism and misanthropy as expressed in his short poems written in 1926.<sup>143</sup> Through the mouthpiece of Mr Maybe, Fei Ming also seems to be expressing his longing for a peaceful society.

### **An impasse in Fei Ming's fiction-writing**

In his preface to *The Life of Mr Maybe*, Fei Ming wrote in February 1932:

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<sup>139</sup>Fei Ming, "Wangjile de riji", *Yu Si*, No. 128 (23 April 1927). See also Chapter One, p. 41 of this thesis.

<sup>140</sup>See Chapter One, p. 17 of this thesis.

<sup>141</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 73.

<sup>142</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>143</sup>See Chapter One, p. 41-42 of this thesis.

I remember when I was jubilant at having nearly finished writing this biography, my interest was not as great as when I started, which is proof of my gradual loss of belief in Mr Maybe. In the middle of writing, I thought of citing the story about Cook Ding's cutting up an ox as my praise of Mr Maybe: 'What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill.'<sup>144</sup> However, later I felt a little hesitant, because I suddenly had a grasp on things like a fortune teller; that without knowing the date of birth, one could not possibly predict good or bad luck, for things in the world, only in the buying-lottery ticket-situation, we have a slim chance. So, not reaching nineteen

years of handling my knife, I don't dare talk like Cook Ding. 我记得我兴高采烈的将此传写到快完时，我对于它的兴会没有当初那么好，那就是我对于莫须有先生渐渐失了信仰的一个确实的证据了，中间有一个时期，曾经想借用庖丁解牛的话，『臣之所好者道也，进乎技矣，』算是我对于莫须有先生的嘉奖，后来乃稍有踌躇，因为我忽然成了一个算命的先生那样有把握，不知道生时年月日，休想说吉凶，天下事情独打彩票你我倒实有几万分之一的希望，操刀没有到十九年就不敢说庖丁先生的话。<sup>145</sup>

Fei Ming seems to suggest that in the middle of writing the novel, he was moving his pen spontaneously, ignoring conventional narration as his "spirit moves as it wants" following the manner of Cook Ding who states; "What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill" in *Zhuangzi*.<sup>146</sup> However, later he seems to have begun to have some doubts about employing so many ambiguities about Mr

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<sup>144</sup>The citation is from *Zhuangzi*, "Neipian, di san, Yangshengzhu pian" (庄子, 内篇, 第三 养生主篇, *Zhuangzi*, "Three 'The Secret of Caring For Life'"). The translation is based on Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 50.

<sup>145</sup>Fei Ming, "Xu", *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>146</sup>In "The Secret of Caring For Life" of *Zhuangzi*, Cook Ding says; "What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now -- now I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to stop and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are ... A good cook changes his knife once a year -- because he cuts. A mediocre cook changes his knife once a month -- because he hacks. I've had this knife of mine for nineteen years and I've cut up thousands of oxen with it, and yet the blade is as good as though it had just come from the grindstone." See Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, pp. 50-51.

Maybe's identity. (He writes: "without knowing the date of birth.") So, he lost confidence in his intuitive way of writing before becoming very good at it. This preface seems to explain the reason why the novel finishes abruptly.

After its publication in 1932, Fei Ming shifted the weight of his writing to poems and essays. With regard to this, he wrote in Chapter Seventeen of his autobiographical story, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane": "After the publication of *The Life of Mr Maybe*, Mr Maybe did not feel like writing (fiction) for a long time" (莫须有先生自《莫须有先生传》出版以后, 久已无心写作了).<sup>147</sup> He also wrote in his preface to *Selected Stories of Fei Ming* in 1957: "After the publication of *The Life of Mr Maybe* in 1932, I never read my stories again. I completely gave up my fiction-writing. At that time I did not know the reason, but just felt that my writings were useless." (从一九三二年"莫须有先生传"出版以后, 我压根儿没有再读一遍我自己的小说, 我把它都抛弃了。我那时也说不出所以然来, 只感到我写的东西没有用。) <sup>148</sup> In accordance with these words, he did not write any substantial fictional works in the 1930s.

In fact, Fei Ming's disillusion with his fiction-writing can be traced in *The Life of Mr Maybe*. Fei Ming seems to write, figuratively, his critical views on his own writings in Mr Maybe's words. For example, in Chapter Three, Mr Maybe says that he is not an assertive person (我是一个没有主张的人) and that perhaps he

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<sup>147</sup>Fei Ming, "Di shiqizhang, Moxuyou xiansheng dongshou zhulun" 第十七章 莫须有先生动手著论, *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 718.

<sup>148</sup>Fei Ming, "Xu" 序, *Fei Ming xiaoshuo xuan*, p. 2.

belongs to a pessimistic school (我或者属于厌世派).<sup>149</sup> These words seem to be indicative of Fei Ming's own, rather apolitical attitude and fondness for using pessimistic images to beautify (mainly) his pastoral stories.

He repeatedly expresses in Mr Maybe's words his own regrets at the self-absorbed attitude of his writings. In Chapter Three, Mr Maybe says: "After all, I get dizzy with success and always think of flaunting myself, which really is my shallowness." (我竟得意忘形, 总是想表现自己, 实在是我的浅薄。) <sup>150</sup> In Chapter Nine, Mr Maybe states that he cannot avoid making an exhibition of himself (还是离不了自己的表现) <sup>151</sup> and sighs: "Ah, by now I am simply an abstract person: for everything I'm just having fun, making myself the subject of my writing ..." (唉, 我这个人如今简直是个抽象的人, 凡百事都是自己闹得玩儿, 自己拿了自己做材料 ...). <sup>152</sup> In Chapter Fourteen, Fei Ming, again in Mr Maybe's words gives vent to his frustration and self-reproach about his writing: "... on this funny and respectable scene of life, you cannot think only of flaunting yourself, and if you must hide behind the scenes, that would also be a shame on you, for in this way, you will temper yourself ..." (... 在人生这个可笑而可敬之幕上, 不可只想着表现自己, 一定要躲在幕后亦殊自觉可耻, 这样你锻炼你自己 ...). <sup>153</sup> Of course, these words can be interpreted simply as a metafictional 'device' showing

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<sup>149</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 25. However, in the 1932 edition of *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, there is a misprint: "厌世纸" is printed instead of "厌世派". Here, the mistake has been corrected by consulting *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 373.

<sup>150</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 25.

<sup>151</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 149.

Mr Maybe's self-consciousness, which a strict structuralist/narratologist would probably maintain. However, I think that they can also be read as the reflection of Fei Ming's thoughts: he seems to insinuate that most of his stories are autobiographical and apolitical and express his own conceptual, abstract ideas 'at the depth of his mind'.<sup>154</sup>

As he mentioned in his preface to the novel, Fei Ming indeed implies his loss of enthusiasm for the novel in Mr Maybe's words in Chapter Twelve: "I didn't think that I would be so disillusioned today. It feels as if I have been vexed constantly for a few days and I don't know what all these words are saying. Perhaps this writing should be stopped now" (想不到到了今日尚有这样的一个幻灭, 好像一连有好几天的烦恼, 凡百言语不知所云, 文章至此大要绝笔).<sup>155</sup> In the last chapter, Fei Ming indicates in Mr Maybe's words his desperate statement about his fiction-writing: "*The Life of Mr Maybe* could be the last work" (莫须有先生传可以获麟绝笔).<sup>156</sup>

The narrator does not state a clear reason why Mr Maybe decides to leave the countryside, which seems to be the key to understanding why Fei Ming reached an impasse in his fiction-writing. However, Mr Maybe's words; "Today's matter is ... totally a spiritual problem" (今日之事 ...完全是个精神上的问题)<sup>157</sup> and the following description of Mr Maybe's thought in the last chapter seem to drop a hint:

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<sup>154</sup>See Chapter Five, p. 255 of this thesis.

<sup>155</sup>Fei Ming, *Moxuyou xiansheng zhuan*, p. 113.

<sup>156</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>157</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 175.

You don't know, you don't know. I am like this. I often feel very irritated at heart. Only I know for sure that what I want to tear up most is what apparently used to be a good poem of mine. I feel as if I've done something evil. Nowadays I suffer from my own actions. Actually I am a real hypocrite ...

你们不晓得，你们不晓得，我是这样的，我常常一会儿心里非常之烦厌，只有我自己知道，我所最要撕破的就是明明曾经是我的一首好诗，好象我作了一个什么大恶业似的，如今自作自受，其实我倒很是一个伪君子 ...<sup>158</sup>

Supposing "what apparently used to be a good poem of mine" was a metaphor for Fei Ming's purely aesthetic pastoral stories<sup>159</sup>, a possible reason can be deduced for why he could no longer write fiction easily in the 1930s. Like Mr Maybe, Fei Ming could perhaps neither be indifferent to the traditional Confucian ideal of working actively for social reform, nor could he drown his frustration in his pastoral world. In the late 1920s towards the 1930s, the atmosphere of the literary world was becoming increasingly revolutionary, and voices of criticism of those who bore an attachment to 'Old China' and her traditional values were raised by those who held progressive views. It seems that Fei Ming could not turn a deaf ear to the criticism and thus there occurred his gradual transition from an idealist, nostalgically dreaming of the past, to a mocking parodist.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>159</sup>It is possible that the phrase was a metaphor for Fei Ming's pastoral stories and poems, but Fei Ming kept writing poems in the 1930s. Therefore it is probably more appropriate to take it as a metaphor mainly for his pastoral stories.

<sup>160</sup>Jin Xunmin 金训敏 suggests the reason for the 'internal link between (the co-existing) beauty and obscurity of Fei Ming's fiction' as the contradiction between Fei Ming's aesthetic ideal (审美理想) and real life (现实人生). See his article, "Fei Ming xiaoshuo de mei yu hui ji qi shenceng guanlian zhi mi" 废名小说的美与晦及其深层关联之谜, published in *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1991, No. 3, p. 158. Although this conclusion seems to coincide with mine, I disagree with Jin's uncritical treatment of the self-criticism in Fei Ming's writings published from 1957 onwards, and his somewhat simplistic, negative judgement about the free (or, loose) structure in *The Life of Mr Maybe* (in Jin's words: "Odd: especially *The Life of Mr Maybe* which is very

In other words, he seems to have been also suffering from the psychological problem of traditional Chinese pastoralists; the wavering between the expected political 'role' and personal, aesthetic pursuit of 'self'.<sup>161</sup> The 'objective' side of the self-conscious Fei Ming speaks through the narrator's mouth at the end of *The Life of Mr Maybe*: the novel closes with the narrator's comment on Mr Maybe's behaviour: "What I think strange is the direction of his ideal-seeking. It is just the opposite of what social custom considers to be the right path." (我以为怪的, 是他追求理想的方向, 恰恰都在社会习惯所指定的正道的反面。)<sup>162</sup> With his introverted character and individualistic literary principles, he probably could not help putting down his 'brush' for fiction-writing in the 1930s.

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careless about the structure of a novel." 古怪: 尤其是《莫须有先生传》很不注意小说的结构。)

<sup>161</sup>Obi Kōichi states that the vacillation between the hermitic aesthetic ideal and the political ambition found in the poems by Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun was a typical problem among the traditional Chinese intellectuals. See Obi, *Chūgoku no inton shisō*, p. 142, p. 162, p. 173 and p. 175.

<sup>162</sup>Chapter Fifteen of the (1932) first edition of the novel ends with the parting of Mr Maybe and his landlady, but the one collected in *Fei Ming xuanji* ends with this narrator's comment (p. 469). This comment is exactly the same as that at the end of Yang Zhensheng's (杨振声, 1890-1956) short story, "He Is a Strange Man" ("Ta shi yi ge guairen" 他是一个怪人) which was published in *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (June 1947). It is just possible that this comment was added to the 1932 version of *The Life of Mr Maybe* by some editorial mistake when it was collected later in *Fei Ming xuanji*. In *Fei Ming xuanji*, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" comes immediately after *The Life of Mr Maybe*. In *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 2, No. 1, the very beginning of Fei Ming's "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" is printed on the next page of the ending of Yang's story. However, this narrator's comment fits *The Life of Mr Maybe* very well, and it is also possible that Fei Ming added it after 1932, being either aware or unaware of the ending of the story by Yang who was his colleague at both Peking and Dongbei Renmin Universities.

Questions may remain as to why Fei Ming wrote this novel which marks an almost jarring contrast to his pastoral stories, and what kind of effect his mock-pastoralism has in assessing him as a writer.

As for the first question, what motivated him were probably his frustration with his own hermitic writing and the society in turmoil, and the sense of restlessness as a Chinese intellectual in the revolutionary social climate discussed above. As mentioned in Chapters One and Two, since the late 1920s, Fei Ming had sublimated his internal problem of the relationship between self and society in the pastoral and satirical short stories. In *The Life of Mr Maybe*, he combined such problems with another problem about his hermitic writing, and expressed in a satirical mode. He also seems to have attempted to show the difference between his ideas and those of traditional Chinese hermits. (In other words, the novel suggests how much pressure the Chinese intellectual could be put under by the traditional Confucian expectation of functioning as a socio-political being.)

As for the second question, the novel reveals his dry, hard, self-critical side of personality as well as the sentimental, romantic side, and makes him appear to be a more complex, stimulating writer than the impression received from reading only his pastoral stories.<sup>163</sup> His mock-pastoralism shows us a fuller picture of his thoughts, especially his agonizing doubts which cannot be traced only in his pastoral and satirical short stories. The parody inherent in the novel seems to suggest his increasing disgust with the act of writing itself--

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<sup>163</sup>Because of the hidden self-referentiality in the novel, it is perhaps more suited to being read after his pastoral stories.

he mocked the pastoral so much that it seems as if there was nowhere else to go in his fiction writing. He almost gave up writing fiction after this. The two of his major works which are seemingly conflicting in nature, the pastoral novel, *The Bridge* and the mock-pastoral novel, *The Life of Mr Maybe* were published in the same year. This peculiar 'record' also indicates his unrivalled uniqueness among other modern Chinese writers.

Although Fei Ming reached an impasse in his fiction-writing after the publication of *The Life of Mr Maybe*, he wrote its sequel in the 1940s. The discussion in the next chapter will compare how the sequel is different from, or similar to, the novel and his previous pastoral stories.

## Chapter Seven

### The Rural Experience As a Refugee in "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane"

After the Sino-Japanese War, Fei Ming reemerged as a story-writer for the first and last time with the sequel to *The Life of Mr Maybe*, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane". It was written at the request of his friend, Zhu Guanqian who was the editor of *Literature Magazine*<sup>1</sup>, and was published in the magazine from June 1947 to November 1948.<sup>2</sup> It describes Mr Maybe's life as a refugee in his hometown, Huangmei during the war and expresses his thoughts about Chinese society and education. It is filled with

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<sup>1</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming zai zhanhou de Beida", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1990, p. 104. Fei Ming wrote: "There is a friend who wants me to write a story: one may well say that he does not know me, although at heart I feel grateful to his sincerity." (有朋友要我写小说, 可谓不知我者了, 虽然我心里很感激他的诚意。) See *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>In *Literature Magazine* from Vol. 2, No. 1 (1 June 1947) to Vol. 3, No. 6 (November 1948). The story consists of seventeen chapters and remains incomplete. According to Feng Jiannan, Fei Ming published each chapter as he finished writing it. So when *Literature Magazine* stopped publication, his story also stopped. See Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming zai zhanhou de Beida", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1990, p. 104. There are some parts of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" which are published in *Wenxue zazhi* but are edited out in the 1988 version collected in *Fei Ming xuanji*. They are in: Chapter Eight, *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (January 1948), pp. 38-39; Chapter Eleven, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (April 1948), pp. 32-34; Chapter Twelve, *ibid.*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (June 1948), pp. 38-39 and p. 41; Chapter Fifteen, *ibid.*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (September 1948), pp. 35-37; and Chapter Sixteen, *ibid.*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (October 1948), pp. 85-88. These omitted parts contain comments which show Fei Ming's political 'incorrectness' in the People's Republic of China, such as a negative view of Lu Xun, defensive words about Zhou Zuoren, lenient opinions about the conduct of the Japanese forces during the war, and lengthy criticisms of the policies of the Chinese Communist Party. The parts omitted will be cited from *Wenxue zazhi* when necessary, but otherwise, in the footnotes in this chapter, citations are taken from the more clearly printed 1988 version in *Fei Ming xuanji*.

patriotic feelings and local colour, and is the most socio-political in nature among Fei Ming's creative works.<sup>3</sup>

The story also seems to be more autobiographical than any of his previous stories: the names of real people such as his daughter, Zhici (止慈)<sup>4</sup> and his son, Sichun (思纯)<sup>5</sup>, Zhi Tang<sup>6</sup>, Xiong Shili<sup>7</sup>, Yu Pingbo<sup>8</sup>, Hu Shizhi (胡适之)<sup>9</sup> as well as real place names in Huangmei appear. Fei Ming's nephew, Feng Jiannan, who was very close to him, during the war in Huangmei and after the war in Peking, refers to it as "a story only with 'facts' and with no need of 'imagination'" (只有 "事实" 而不要 "想象" 的小说) and claims that each chapter records actual events.<sup>10</sup> On the story's fictional elements and relationship with *The Life of Mr Maybe*, the narrator of the story writes in Chapter One:

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<sup>3</sup>Feng Jiannan claims that Fei Ming's view of Chinese social life in the story reflects the political atmosphere of the time when people were fighting for democracy and revolting against civil wars. ("与当时人民争民主反内战的政治空气大有关系的。") See Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming zai zhanhou de Beida", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1990, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup>In Chapter Two. See Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 475

<sup>5</sup>In Chapter Six. See *ibid.*, p. 535.

<sup>6</sup>"Zhi Tang lao" 知堂老 (= Zhou Zuoren) in Chapters Ten and Seventeen. See *ibid.*, p. 593 and p. 718. Also, in Chapter Eleven published in *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (April 1948), p. 32.

<sup>7</sup>"Xiong Shili weng" 熊十力翁 in Chapters Ten and Seventeen. See Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 593 and p. 718. Also, in Chapter Eleven published in *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (April 1948), p. 32.

<sup>8</sup>"Guhuai jushi Yu Pingbo" 古槐居士俞平伯 in Chapter Twelve. See *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 634. Yu Pingbo's nickname of "Guhuai jushi" (古槐居士 "Lay Buddhist of Old Chinese Scholartree Studio") seems to come from the name of his house in Peking called "Guhuai shuwu" (古槐书屋 "Old Chinese Scholartree Studio"). See *Yu Pingbo yanjiu ziliao*, ed. Sun Yurong, p. 95 and p. 105.

<sup>9</sup>"Kaozhengjia Hu Shizhi boshi" 考证家胡适之博士 (a textual critic, Dr Hu Shizhi) in Chapter Fifteen. See *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 680. Hu Shi (胡适) styled himself "Shizhi" (适之).

<sup>10</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming zai zhanhou de Beida", *Xin wenxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1990, p. 104. Feng Jiannan also appears as "a senior middle school student" (高中学生) in his real name ("Jiannan") in Chapter Twelve of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane". See *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 640.

But as for the matter of full name, Mr Maybe considers it irrelevant ... even if we used a false name, it would still not impair its factuality ... "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" is totally factual, and the human relationships are all there; Mr Maybe did not spend a solitary life anymore. It can be said to be a history, and it is also simply a work of philosophy; originally, according to Hegel's theory, history is philosophy. We still follow the convention and take "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" as a piece of biographical literature.

不过关于姓名之事，莫须有先生认为没有关系，... 我们就是用了一个假名字，仍不害其为真的事实。... 则《莫须有先生坐飞机以后》完全是事实，其中五伦俱全，莫须有先生不是过着孤独的生活了。它可以说是历史，它简直还是一部哲学，本来照赫格尔的学说历史就是哲学。我们还是从俗，把《莫须有先生坐飞机以后》当作一部传记文学。<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the story, the narrator is reliable, unlike that of *The Life of Mr Maybe*. Also, the descriptions of Mr Maybe's name and age<sup>12</sup>, his career<sup>13</sup>, his friends<sup>14</sup>, his family<sup>15</sup> and the settings which appear in real names seem to match those of Fei Ming when the story was written. Therefore, as Feng Jiannan and the narrator suggest, it

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<sup>11</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 471.

<sup>12</sup>In Chapter Four (pp. 497-498), Mr Maybe says that his surname is Feng. In Chapter Two (p. 482), Mr Maybe's age is suggested as "around forty" (四十岁上下).

<sup>13</sup>In Chapters One (p. 470) and Eight (p. 566), Mr Maybe mentions his previous work, *The Life of Mr Maybe*. In Chapter Two (p. 479), the narrator states that Mr Maybe lived in his hometown for fifteen years in his childhood.

<sup>14</sup>In Chapter Eleven published in *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (April 1948) (p. 32), the narrator also reveals the real names of the people he indirectly mentioned earlier in the story: "'An old philosopher' mentioned in Chapter Two of this story is old Xiong Shili, and 'an old man whom Mr Maybe met in Beiping' is old Zhi Tang; now this story is becoming more and more a biography and history, not a fiction, so there is no need to conceal names, and it must bring out all the names." (在本书第二章所说的『一位老哲学家』便是熊十力翁，第五章说的『在北平遇见一位老人』便是知堂老，现在本书越来越是传记，是历史，不是小说，无隐名之必要，应该把名字都拿出来了。) This part, however, is omitted in the 1988 version of the story in *Fei Ming xuanji*.

<sup>15</sup>In Chapter Twelve (p. 633), the narrator writes that Mr Maybe has two brothers. As for Mr Maybe's other relatives, Fei Ming's nephew, Feng Jiannan has commented that the story is more or less factual. (Mr Maybe's wife is called "Mrs Maybe" 莫须有先生太太, and her real name does not appear in the story.)

seems appropriate to consider that Fei Ming kept the fictional name of "Mr Maybe" as it had been in the previous novel, but wrote the events quite faithfully to the autobiographical facts.

The title of the story seems to have three metaphorical meanings. First, it has the direct meaning of "written after Fei Ming (= Mr Maybe) flew in an aeroplane". Feng Jiannan gives background information: to go to Peking from Huangmei for the first time after the war, he and Fei Ming took an aeroplane together from Nanjing.<sup>16</sup> The narrator of the story states in Chapter One the reason why it has the title, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", "although what is written concerns matters before he flew in an aeroplane, that is, a record of taking refuge". (虽然写的是他坐飞机以前的事情, 是一部避难记).<sup>17</sup> He says that the story is "what Mr Maybe wrote after taking an aeroplane for the Chinese to read" (莫须有先生坐飞机以后有心写给中国人读的), and explains: Mr Maybe was afraid that every Chinese intellectual would take an aeroplane for travelling in the future and as a result, would totally forget about the condition of the country. As Mr Maybe immersed himself among the people, he might as well leave a record.<sup>18</sup> So, the second implication of the title is the concern for 'the condition of the country' which Mr Maybe wishes for the high-flyers (in the Republican era), that is, Chinese intellectuals, to have. Thirdly, it seems to be a hidden statement about the changes of Mr Maybe (= Fei Ming). In Chapter Eight, after Mr Maybe's defensive words about his own writings of the past, the narrator

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<sup>16</sup>Feng Jiannan, "Fei Ming zai zhanhou de Beida", *Xin wénxue shiliao*, No. 1, 1990, p. 101.

<sup>17</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 473.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 473-474.

states: "This is yet somehow similar to the style of *The Life of Mr Maybe*, that is, publicizing oneself, and Mr Maybe was laughable again. After Mr Maybe flew in an aeroplane [what he writes] must have an educational meaning, and should not be for oneself, but for others." (这却有点近乎《莫须有先生传》的作风，宣传自己，莫须有先生又好笑了。莫须有先生坐飞机以后，则要具有教育的意义，不是为己，要为人。) <sup>19</sup> These words suggests Fei Ming's intention to show the changes of his views in the story.

The story is stylistically plainer than his pre-war stories. Fei Ming also expresses his views about the life of the countryfolk from quite a different viewpoint in this story. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **The outline of the story**

Each chapter has a major topic which is summarized by its title. Although the chapters are arranged chronologically according to the time of the major topical events (except for Chapter Thirteen and the early part of Chapter Fourteen in which the order of events are partly reversed), the narrator also digresses from them as his memory sprouts up and he inserts descriptions of the related events which happened before or after them. He also spares much space for relating Mr Maybe's views on various issues such as the war, Chinese people, society, education and religion.

The story begins with the narrator's dismissal of *The Life of Mr Maybe* ("Do you children also read *The Life of Mr Maybe*? Is *The*

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 566.

*Life of Mr Maybe* worth being read by children? Now I read it myself and feel ashamed." 你们小孩子也读《莫须有先生传》吗? 《莫须有先生传》有给你们读的价值吗? 我现在自己读着且感着惭愧哩。<sup>20</sup>) and explanation of the title of this sequel (Chapter One). In autumn 1939, Mr Maybe is going to teach at a primary school outside the county town of Huangmei, and he, his wife and their eleven year old daughter and five year old son move from their house in the town. They are going to stay at the house of Mrs Maybe's relative, the Shi (石) family at Lashuke (腊树窠), so Mr Maybe buys white sugar (which was considered particularly valuable during the wartime) as a gift for them (Chapter Two). Mr Maybe and his family are invited to lunch by the Shi family (Chapter Three). Mr Maybe finds a house to move into with the help of Uncle Shi (石老爹). Mrs Maybe buys some rice from Mrs Shi (石老太太) (Chapter Four). After moving into Mr Maybe's relative, Shun's (顺) house near a brook at Longxiqiao (龙锡桥), Mrs Maybe and Shun's wife ladle out water from the brook. Mr Maybe and his son make a coir rope from palm leaves (Chapter Five). On the day before Mr Maybe starts teaching at Jinjiazhai (金家寨) Primary School, he and his son go to see a local clan school (Chapter Six). At the primary school, Mr Maybe meets his colleagues and teaches Chinese and natural science. In his Chinese classes, he teaches that a composition should be about one's life. He also shows his students the grammar of sentences. He also makes Huangmei customs topics of his students' compositions (Chapter Seven and Eight). Mr Maybe's family go to Tingqian (停前) to see a fair (Chapter

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 470.

Nine). Mr Maybe writes a letter on behalf of a distant relative, Feng Sanji (冯三记) asking for the county magistrate not to call him up for military service (Chapter Ten). A neighbour, Wang Yushu (王玉叔) sends taroes (芋头) as a present for Mr Maybe's family, and they enjoy eating them. Later on that day, Mr Maybe goes to the pine woods (Chapter Eleven). Mr Maybe goes to the temple near his house in the town, Ziyunge (紫云阁) where his father is. There, he sees his father and his nephew. The Daoist nun of the temple asks Mr Maybe to write New Year scrolls for the temple. He writes and returns to his house at Longxiqiao in snow (Chapter Twelve). On New Year's Day in 1940, Mr Maybe's children go to play at Shun's house in snow (Chapter Thirteen). On the twentyninth of the twelfth month, 1939, Mr Maybe goes shopping to Tuqiaopu (土桥铺) in snow to buy food for the New Year celebration. On the second day of the new year, 1940, distant relatives pay a New Year call to Mr Maybe's house (Chapter Fourteen). In Spring 1940, Mr Maybe becomes an English teacher at Huangmei Junior Middle School which moved to Wuzu Temple. Mr Maybe's various memories related to this temple are described (Chapter Fifteen). Mr Maybe has a conversation with an old lady near the school who overhears his English class and misunderstands "girl" as "gou'er" (狗儿 "dog") and "comma" as "hama" (虾蟆 "frog") (Chapter Sixteen). Mr Maybe's family moves to Shuimochong (水磨冲) in winter 1942 where they enjoy gathering firewood in the woods and washing clothes in a river. Mr Maybe writes his Buddhist thesis, "On Ālayavjñā-ñā" (Chapter Seventeen).

Apart from these main events, Fei Ming also refers to the hardship of life during the war such as financial difficulty, a high

rate of inflation, the terror in fleeing from the enemy's attack, houses and historical buildings being destroyed, women being raped, and worries about children who have to grow up in such deprived circumstances. However, in looking at the above-mentioned central events which Fei Ming chooses to make title topics of each chapter, there still seem to be some pastoral elements in the story.

### Pastoral elements

The urban-country perspective which is characteristic of pastoral can be seen in Mr Maybe's views. When he is asked by his distant relatives to write a letter for Feng Sanji in Chapter Ten, the narrator states that: "Therefore, although still resting his basis on the attitude of an urban civilized person, Mr Maybe did not care for matters which were not about himself ..." (因此, 莫须有先生虽仍是本着都市上文明人的态度, 不管自己本分以外的事情...) <sup>21</sup> Similarly, in Chapter Fourteen, the narrator describes Mr Maybe's emotional barrier between himself and the farmers caused by his individualistic way of thinking: "Mr Maybe still has not got rid of an urban civilized man's habit; apart from himself, there was only society ..." (莫须有先生还是都市上文明人的习惯未除了, 除了己只有社会了 ...) <sup>22</sup>

From this dual perspective, Mr Maybe's love of his native place <sup>23</sup>, and simple pleasures which he and his family find in the

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 596.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 672.

<sup>23</sup>The narrator says emphatically in Chapter Two: "Do you have anyone who could love his native place as much as Mr Maybe? Mr Maybe's native place would be immortal because of Mr Maybe." (你们有谁能象莫须有先生一样爱故乡呢? 莫须有先生的故乡将因莫须有先生而不朽了。) See *ibid.*, p. 420.

very basic way of living are expressed.<sup>24</sup> As in his pastoral stories of the 1920s and the 1930s, Fei Ming also positively describes children's innocence throughout this story. For example, in Chapter Five, there is this passage:

At this time, Mr Maybe, Ci and Chun were loitering under the two palm trees at the roadside on the opposite bank. These two palm trees had grown really exuberant. The leaves were green and were like wings but of course they were the leaves on the trees; people were underneath them but what they felt beautiful was the sky above the leaves. For this, Mr Maybe had his childlike innocence set off, because he used to like palm trees best in his childhood. He observed the two children; Ci was quiet, Chun was active; quiet was smiling like a happy fish in water; active was single-minded like an ant working. Chun wanted Daddy to pluck down a palm leaf, and standing up on his toes, Daddy plucked it down. This leaf ... fell into the tiny hand. Chun couldn't handle it, so sat on the ground and said: "I'll make a fan."

He also put his leaf on the ground. At this time, he really felt that the ground under these feet was like Mother Earth; so reliable, while he could be so wilful; as he wanted to rely on her, he just relied on her, and Mother Earth remained indifferent.

此时莫须有先生同慈同纯在对岸道旁两株棕榈树下徘徊。这两株棕榈树真是长得茂盛。叶绿如翼，本是树上的叶子，人在其下但觉得美丽是叶上的天空。莫须有先生对之，自己的童心都萌发了，因为他小时最喜欢棕榈树。他观察两个小孩，慈是静，纯是动，静而笑，是如水中鱼乐；动而专一，是如蚂蚁工作。纯要爸爸替他摘一柄叶子下来，爸爸便点着脚替他摘一柄下来了。这一柄叶子 ... 落在小小的手中了。纯奈何它不得，于是席地而坐，说道：

"我来做一把扇子。"

他把他的叶子放在地上了。他这时真感得这足下的地同地母亲一样，那么的可依靠，而他可那么的随便了，他想要依靠便依靠着了，而地母亲若无其事然。<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>See especially Chapters Five, Nine and Seventeen.

<sup>25</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 517.

Here, stylistic and thematic characteristics very similar to his previous pastoral stories can be seen. In the line: "The leaves were green and were like wings but of course they were the leaves on the trees; people were underneath them but what they felt beautiful was the sky above the leaves" (叶绿如翼, 本是树上的叶子, 人在其下但觉得美丽是叶上的天空), can be found odd shifts of visual angles. First, the narrator's viewpoint is up with the leaves, and then it comes down to the level of people's height, which is followed by another swift move sky-wards. Also, there are two cleverly contrasted (semi-) parallel phrases: "Ci was quiet, Chun was active" (慈是静, 纯是动); and "quiet was smiling like a happy fish in water; active was single-minded like an ant working." (静而笑, 是如水中鱼乐; 动而专一, 是如蚂蚁工作。)

In this passage, Fei Ming depicts positively little Chun's innocent figure wanting to make a fan, embraced by the profundity of "Mother Earth". In this respect, we can see the same approach to the relationship between a human being and nature as in his previous pastoral stories. Also, in looking at his child, Mr Maybe's memories of his own childhood are triggered. Moreover, in parts the narrator adopts the child's point of view. These are typical of pastoral scenes in "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane": in many other parts of the story, the natural world is sometimes described from an artless child's point of view.<sup>26</sup> Also, Mr Maybe often nostalgically remembers his own childhood as he admiringly observes his own children, perhaps because he is back in his native land where he was

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<sup>26</sup>For example, in Chapter Two (p. 478), Chun's thoughts about picking radishes in the field to eat are described from Chun's point of view. Also, in Chapter Four (pp. 508-509), Mr Maybe, who "likes to observe children's psychology" (喜欢观察小孩子的心理), interprets his children's feelings.

brought up.<sup>27</sup> The attention to childhood innocence is characteristic of Fei Ming's pastoralism, which indicates his longing for the simplicity of a child's life instead of the complexity of adulthood.

Fei Ming often mentions dusk and crossing a bridge in depicting the scenes of Mr Maybe's rural life, which is also reminiscent of his previous pastoral stories. He seems to employ dusk scenes again for an aesthetic, restful, and slightly melancholic image in this story. For instance, in Chapter Ten:

At dusk, when all the work had already been finished and everyone had gone back to rest, Mr Maybe, as a child, would look around the vastness here; the fields were much richer and more beautiful than the sky, and numerous stars were far less earnest than the radiance of rice straw. It was indeed as if Mr Maybe had come here secretly to be an immortal; he was reluctant to leave the fields.

黄昏时，一切的工作已成，大家都回去休息了，莫须有先生，一个小孩，常是一个人在这里苍茫四顾一下，地下比天上富丽得多，繁星远不如稻草的光芒切实了。莫须有先生真是仿佛偷偷来到这里做神仙，他留恋地上了。<sup>28</sup>

This is another passage which eulogizes earth and nature in the story. As in his pastoral stories of the 1920s, the dusk scene conveys the image of homecoming, faint loneliness and nostalgia.<sup>29</sup>

The narrator describes Mr Maybe's fond memory of crossing bridges in his childhood in hometown in Chapter Two:

Ci liked crossing bridges best, and Daddy had also liked crossing bridges when small; she often heard Daddy say that

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<sup>27</sup>For example, in Chapter four (p. 511), as Mr Maybe sees Ci help husking rice, he remembers the time when he did the same thing as a child. Also, in Chapter Fifteen (pp. 681-689), Mr Maybe remembers his memories of Wuzu Temple.

<sup>28</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 615.

<sup>29</sup>Dusk scenes also appear in Chapters Four (p. 495, p. 498), Fifteen (p. 688), and Seventeen (p. 705). In Chapter Seventeen, Fei Ming writes: "a lonely atmosphere of dusk" (寂寞的黄昏空气).

those bridges were all outside the South Town and must be passed on the way to their maternal family home. It was Daddy's maternal family home and also Ci and Chun's maternal family home. Those bridges all had a soul: there were a wooden bridge and a stone bridge; there used to be a wooden bridge but not any more, but as there was a sandy shore, there was a memory of the bridge. The stone bridge was silent, or a drawing; for it, one would be a passerby standing on the edge of a pool and longing for fish, and water was so deep, the shadow of the bridge was meeting the fish. The wooden bridge was a close friend, or music; one would often run about on it, which was good fun, but not walking, and there was often no water ...

慈最喜欢过桥，爸爸小的时候也喜欢过桥，她常常听见爸爸说，那些桥都在南城外，是到外家去的途中所必须经过的。是爸爸的外家，也是慈同纯的外家。那些桥都有灵魂，有一木桥，有一石桥，有一木桥而现在无有而有沙滩而有桥的记忆。石桥是沈默，是图画，对于它是一个路人，而且临渊羨鱼，水最深，桥影见鱼。木桥是密友，是音乐，常在上面跑来跑去，是跑得好玩的，并不是行路，桥下常无水 ...<sup>30</sup>

This seems to illustrate the background of the scenes of bridge crossing in his novel, *The Bridge*.<sup>31</sup> The passage also provides the background of Fei Ming's poem written in Peking for his friend, mentioned in the early part of Chapter One of this thesis.<sup>32</sup> The stylistic traits of his previous pastoral fiction can also be found here: there are contrasting descriptions of the stone bridge and the wooden bridge which are personified ("The stone bridge was silent" 石桥是沈默 and "The wooden bridge was a close friend" 木桥是密友). Futhermore, Fei Ming uses metaphors with a long imaginative stride,

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<sup>30</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 476.

<sup>31</sup>In Chapters "On the Way" and "Bridge" of *The Bridge*.

<sup>32</sup>See Chapter One, pp. 18-19 of this thesis.

comparing a stone bridge to a drawing and especially, a wooden bridge to music.<sup>33</sup>

The story mainly owes its rich local colour to Fei Ming's enthusiastic descriptions of Huangmei customs<sup>34</sup>, dialects<sup>35</sup> and food<sup>36</sup>.

He also suggests doubts about modern technology in Mr Maybe's statement at the beginning of Chapter One:

After flying in an aeroplane this time, I had a big impression, that is, the problem of machinery and the happiness of the human being ... like flying in an aeroplane; it is the same as a lull, making one only have a noise at the ears, no bright feelings, just bewilderment and no thoughts. Going from Point A to Point B is the same as a dream; living but having lost the meaning of being a 'Child of Earth'. If, in the future the world should have no religion, no art, no science but have only machines, with people being indifferent to each other, not to mention passersby, everyone would become just a person surrounded by machines, or in 'dreams'. Machines will inevitably develop day by day, and aeroplanes will inevitably become widespread day by day, but we Chinese civilians do not care. Never mind this material civilization, they do not have such need, or such urgency; what they do have are years and worries.

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<sup>33</sup>In Chapter Fifteen, Fei Ming also describes his memory of crossing a bridge. See Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, pp. 688-689.

<sup>34</sup>In Chapter Eight (pp. 564-569), Fei Ming describes the Huangmei funerary custom which became the model for "Farewell Lanterns" in *The Bridge*. Also in Chapter Nine (p. 587), the goblin figure called 'Difang' in the folklore of the Huangmei region is described. See Chapter Three, pp. 113-114 of this thesis.

<sup>35</sup>For example, in Chapter Eleven (p. 621), the Huangmei expression, "fen de hen" (粉得很: "soft and floury") which is used to describe the taste of taroes, sweet potatoes and chestnuts is introduced. Also see Chapter Sixteen (p. 697).

<sup>36</sup>In Chapter Nine (pp. 577-580), the local sweet, "tangba" (糖粑) is described as well as its two different ways of pronunciation which distinguish between the one sold at the streets (the stress comes at the end) and the one made at home (the stress comes in front). Fei Ming writes that "tangba" "represents the taste of Huangmei" (代表黄梅县的乡土味).

我这回坐飞机以后，发生一个很大的感想，即机器与人类幸福问题。... 坐飞机亦然，等于催眠，令人只有耳边声音，没有心地光明，只有糊涂，没有思想，从甲地到乙地等于一个梦，生而为人失掉了‘地之子’的意义，世界将来没有宗教，没有艺术，也没有科学，只有机械，人与人漠不相关，连路人都说不上，大家都是机器中人，梦中人。机械总会一天一天发达下去，飞机总会一天一天普遍起来，然而咱们中国老百姓则不在乎。不在乎这个物质文明，他们没有这需要，没有这迫切，他们有的是岁月，有的是心事。<sup>37</sup>

The experience of the ravages of war seems to have strengthened Fei Ming's feelings against modern technology.<sup>38</sup> Probably this is why Fei Ming still wrote about Mr Maybe's joy of simple family life in remote areas during the war.

The narrator often compares Mr Maybe's places of refuge with the Peach Blossom Spring. In Chapter Three, the village of Lashuke to which Mr Maybe's family first moved is described: "... this was

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<sup>37</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 472.

<sup>38</sup>In Chapter Nine of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" (p. 573), Fei Ming also inserts a criticism of modern technology which causes misery in the war. After Mr Maybe sees electric and telephone wires at the roadside on the way to Tingqian where he and his family were going to see a fair, the narrator states: "... he was lost in thought. He thought: these are the most needed tools for the war of resistance. These are modern civilization, but modern civilization in China has the aspect of cherishing the outmoded and preserving the outworn. Aren't these worn-out wires the beggars of modern civilization?" (... 他便陷入沉思，他想，这些是抗战最需要的工具了，这些是现代文明，而现代文明在中国是抱残守阙的面貌了，这些破旧的电线不是现代文明的乞丐吗？) Also, in Chapter Three, Fei Ming addresses Chinese intellectuals (=你们) about Chinese peasants (=他们): "They just do not need your modern civilization, and if you think of conquering them by modern civilization, it would be fitting enough to invite your own destruction." (你们的现代文明他们都不需要，你们想以现代文明来征服他们适足以招你们自己的毁灭。) Also, as mentioned in Chapter One of this thesis, even before the war in the 1920s and the 1930s, Fei Ming seems to have been rather old-fashioned himself, using a brush instead of a pen and wearing a traditional Chinese gown. In the mid-1930s, he also expressed loneliness using the image of a car in his poem, "Street Corner" ("Jietou"). In his other poems written in the 1930s and 1940s, Fei Ming showed his negative view of modern technology through images such as radios, aeroplanes and bombs. See Chapter One, pp. 65-67 of this thesis. This anti-technology viewpoint seems to be in line with Daoist sensibilities. See Fukunaga Kōji 福永光司, "Gendai bunmei ni keikokusuru Rōsō no 'Tao' no tetsugaku" 现代文明に警告する老荘の『道』の哲学, *Chūgoku no tetsugaku, shūkyō, geijutsu* 中国の哲学, 宗教, 芸術 (Kyoto: Jinbun shoin, 1988, rpt. 1992), pp. 43-56.

indeed a Peach Blossom Spring where people seemed as if they did not know which dynasty it was at the moment, although the spatial distance from this village to the county town was only thirty five *li*." (... 这里真是桃花源, 不知今是何世, 而空间的距离此乡与县城只不过相隔三十五里。) <sup>39</sup> Again in Chapter Four, when Mr Maybe's wife, daughter and son are husking rice at Lashuke, the narrator states: "... and at this time this husking place could be described generally as a Peach Blossom Spring, to Mr Maybe's happy surprise; he had never thought that in these troubled times, his family could still have a habitat." (... 而现在这碾场可以笼统地说是在桃花源了, 莫须有先生喜出意外, 他不想到在这个乱世他一家人还能够有所栖息了。) <sup>40</sup> In this way, the narrator seems to refer to the Peach Blossom Spring to emphasize the unexpected peacefulness of Mr Maybe's rural life as a refugee. In many other parts of the story, he also stresses it: for example, in Chapter Fifteen, he comments on the atmosphere of Wuzu Temple when Mr Maybe visited there in 1939: "no one seemed like a person living in the troubled times" (大家都不像乱世的人了). <sup>41</sup>

However, the narrator denies that he is describing a utopia in Chapter Nine:

Mr Maybe's seeing a fair at Tingqian on that day just matched the words in "Peach Blossom Spring": "They asked what dynasty it was now. They had never even heard of the Han, let alone the Wei and the Jin." This is not at all Mr Maybe's poetic conception but a realistic description -- Mr Maybe was immersing himself deep among the people at the moment, wishing to seek for a way of saving the nation, so how could there still be the sense of a poet's avoiding the world?

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<sup>39</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 483.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 508.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 689.

莫须有先生今天在停前看会，正合了《桃花源记》上面的话，“问今是何世？不知有汉，无论魏晋。”这一点也不是莫须有先生的诗意，是写实，——莫须有先生现在正是深入民间，想寻求一个救国之道，那里还有诗人避世的意思呢？<sup>42</sup>

As these words suggest, it is true that Mr Maybe and his family are not avoiding 'the world' like hermitic poets, but are forced to hide away to avoid the disasters of war. On the whole, "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" is not a traditional pastoral work: Fei Ming often directly describes, without glorification, terrible hardships as well as his own opinions about social and educational reforms.<sup>43</sup> However, it seems appropriate to say that the story contains some vividly pastoral elements in which Fei Ming's character, unchanged since the early 1930s, can still be glimpsed.

#### A comparison with *The Life of Mr Maybe*

Apart from the apparent similarities of the name, "Mr Maybe" and the autobiographical nature, there are many differences between "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" and *The Life of Mr Maybe*.

The most prominent difference would be the change of Fei Ming's attitude towards his writing. Instead of writing just for self expression, he aims to endow "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" with some historical or educational meanings. His intention of 'recording' what happened in Huangmei during the war is clear in the narrator's words in Chapter Twelve. The narrator

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 577.

<sup>43</sup>Raymond Williams writes in discussing pastoral: "And country life, as traditionally, is an innocent alternative to ambition, disturbance and war." See Williams, *The Country and the City* (first published in 1973; London: The Hogarth Press, 1985), p. 24.

states just before recounting the incident in which Mr Maybe's aunt was stabbed and wounded by the enemy: "Mr Maybe felt that he must learn from Sima Guang (司马光, 1019-1086) writing *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (*Zizhi tongjian* 资治通鉴)<sup>44</sup>, and record how Third Auntie was wounded." (莫须有先生觉得他应该学司马光做资治通鉴, 把三舅母受伤的经过记下的。)<sup>45</sup> As for his detailed accounts of Huangmei local customs, he says in Chapter Eight: "On human relationships and customs, there must be records, then there would be an educational meaning." (必于人情风俗方面有所记录乃有教育的意义。)<sup>46</sup>

Such a change in his literary attitude naturally leads to another obvious difference: Fei Ming discusses national issues in addition to personal feelings in "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane". At the beginning of the story, Mr Maybe states:

I have always talked about my private matters, and never talked about national affairs, but today, only after flying in an aeroplane, I feel that without talking, things are not clear, and talks always need someone to give them, so I hope that fellow countrymen will not ignore my words.

本人向来只谈个人私事, 不谈国家大事, 今日坐飞机以后乃觉的话不说不明, 话总要人说, 幸国人勿河汉斯言。<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>*Zizhi tongjian* consists of 294 volumes and records Chinese history for 1362 years from the early period of the Warring States to the end of Five Dynasties in annalistic style.

<sup>45</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 638.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 565.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 473. The expression, "hehan siyan" (河汉斯言) derives from "Free and Easy Wandering" of *Zhuangzi*: "[Jian] Wu said to [Lian] Shu, 'I was listening to [Jie Yu's] talk -- big and nothing to back it up, going on and on without turning around. I was completely dumbfounded at his words -- no more end than the Milky Way, wild and wide of the mark, never coming near human affairs!'" See Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 33. (The Chinese original text is: 肩吾问于连叔曰: "吾闻言于接舆, 大而无当, 往而不返, 吾惊怖其言, 忧河汉而无极也。") "Hehan" (河汉) means the Milky Way. So the expression

In accordance with these words, Fei Ming often refers to the "national spirit" (民族精神) and discusses his own opinion about what Chinese intellectuals should do to improve China. For example, in Chapter Seven, the narrator states: "The lifeline of China still lies in her national spirit" (中国的命脉还存之于其民族精神)<sup>48</sup>, and also in Chapter Twelve: "Chinese national spirit must firstly depend on the majority of peasants." (中国的民族精神本来要看大多数的农民。)<sup>49</sup> After the experience of living closely with the peasants in the countryside, Fei Ming writes in Chapter Nine: "Before 1937, Mr Maybe did not understand the Chinese masses at all, and simply hated somewhat bitterly that the Chinese masses were good-for-nothing ... now he knows deeply that the good-for-nothing are Chinese intellectuals and that the majority of the masses are not responsible at all." (莫须有先生在民国二十六年以前, 完全不了解中国的民众, 简直有点痛恨中国民众没出息 ... 现在深知没出息是中国的读书人了, 大多数的民众完全不负责。)<sup>50</sup> One of the reasons why Mr Maybe thinks this way is because it is peasants who have to be conscripted and to pay grain tax to the state.<sup>51</sup> So the narrator comments in Chapter Ten:

Those who had been teachers at universities in large cities all along like Mr Maybe can be said to have never been a 'citizen'. The sufferings of a citizen, the responsibility of a citizen, the duty of a citizen, they have never experienced these. In the war of resistance this time, they are regarded as refugees, as sharing their destiny with ordinary citizens, and to be citizens. However, after fleeing to a certain place, they would again be

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has the meaning of talk which is big, wild and unbelievable. It can also mean something to ignore.

<sup>48</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 548.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 631.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 575.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 489 (Chapter Three) and p. 599 (Chapter Ten).

the same as before in large cities, still be of the special class, not of the citizen class. That's right, have their sons ever become soldiers? ... Not only have they not experienced, but also they do not know how much sufferings the ordinary citizens endured for conscription. If citizens have nothing to do with conscription, can they still be regarded as citizens? Therefore, if one says that Chinese intellectuals are of the special class, one is not treating them unjustly. In fact they are not qualified to talk about national affairs, because they have nothing to do with national affairs.

同莫须有先生一样一向在大都市大学校里头当教员的人，可以说是没有做过“国民”。作国民的痛苦，做国民的责任，做国民的义务，他们一概没有经验。这次抗战他们算是逃了难，算是与一般国民有共同的命运，算是做了国民了。然而逃难逃到一定的地方以后，他们又同从前在大都市里一样，仍是特殊阶级，非国民阶级。是的，他们的儿子当过兵吗？... 他们不但没有经验到，而且不知道一般国民对于征兵感受着如何的痛苦。国民于征兵无关，还能算是国民吗？故说中国的知识阶级是特殊阶级，一点没有冤枉他们。实在他们不配谈国家的事情，因为他们与国家的事情不相干。<sup>52</sup>

Sharing the life of refugees with the peasants and witnessing their immediate problems as an adult, Mr Maybe seems to have begun thinking of social causes. Fei Ming's image of peasants is no longer the impressionistic one of his distant memories of his early years as expressed in his pastoral stories. Here, Mr Maybe now shows sympathy with peasants, not romantically but more analytically. He states that Chinese peasants become soldiers and pay grain tax, not because they love their country but because they are simply afraid of government officials (官).<sup>53</sup> He states that Chinese peasants are slaves to the government because they are forced to be so, and that they are only accustomed to be slaves for the sake of survival.<sup>54</sup> He

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 591.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 489 (Chapter Three).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 573-574 (Chapter Nine).

also maintains eagerly that Chinese intellectuals should be ashamed of themselves for forcing them into such conditions.<sup>55</sup>

On education, Mr Maybe harshly criticizes clan school education<sup>56</sup> and eight-legged essays<sup>57</sup>, and suggests his idea that the standard of a good piece of writing should be whether or not it can be a model for children.<sup>58</sup>

In this way, Mr Maybe after 1937 is hardly individualistic, which is a dramatic change from *The Life of Mr Maybe*.

As mentioned earlier, the style of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" is plainer than *The Life of Mr Maybe*. Unlike the previous novel in which the identities of Mr Maybe, the "author of 'The Life of Mr Maybe'" and Fei Ming are made ambiguous, in this story, they are clearly indicated as one at the beginning. Also, the narrator of this sequel is generally not self-conscious about his narration.<sup>59</sup> He is confident and consistent, and does not mix narrative levels. In other words, the narrated world (= 'story') and the narrating world (= discourse) are neatly separate. The narrator is not intrusive, either. Allusions are sometimes also used in the

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 489 (Chapter Three).

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 524-527 (Chapter Six).

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 532 (Chapter Six), p. 557 and p. 570 (Chapter Eight), and p. 692 (Chapter Sixteen).

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 470 (Chapter One) and p. 558 (Chapter Eight).

<sup>59</sup>However, there are a few parts which present the narrator's comments on what he describes: for example, in Chapter Nine (p. 589), after describing a masked figure in a fair and a village woman making a joke together, the narrator praises himself: "... in Chinese writings, there are very few which have such a humorous atmosphere as this." (... 中国的文章里头很少有这样幽默空气了。) Also, in Chapter Eleven (pp. 620-621), after describing the scene in which Mr Maybe's family enjoy eating taroes, the narrator talks about himself (=Mr Maybe) humourously: "Although he has traversed famous mountains and great rivers just like Sima Qian, Sima Qian has never written this piece praising taroes." (他虽然同太史公一样游过名山大川, 但从来没有这一篇芋头赞了。)

sequel, but they are more from early Chinese philosophical texts than from traditional Chinese poems. They are direct quotations from such classical works as *The Analects*<sup>60</sup>, *Mencius*<sup>61</sup>, *Zhuangzi*<sup>62</sup>, *The Zuo Commentary*<sup>63</sup>, *The Book of Songs*<sup>64</sup> and Tao Yuanming's works<sup>65</sup>, which are generally used to introduce well-known ideas to illustrate the points Mr Maybe makes in discussing his views on society and education. The sequel is very much like an essay with its loose plot structure and the narrator's frequent, and sometimes repetitious, discussions of his views.<sup>66</sup>

There are also some subtle similarities between *The Life of Mr Maybe* and this sequel. Stylistically, as pointed out earlier, the similarities are mainly in his descriptions of pastoral scenes. Also, some aspects of Mr Maybe's personality do not seem to have changed. Although Mr Maybe in the sequel might give an overall impression of an awakened man burning with his eager concern for

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<sup>60</sup>See "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", Chapters Six (p. 535), Seven (p. 550), Nine (p. 580), Ten (p. 596, p. 599, p. 600, p. 610), Eleven (p. 622, p. 624), Twelve (p. 641), Thirteen (p. 648), Fifteen (p. 681), Sixteen (p. 694), and Seventeen (p. 721, p. 722).

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., Chapters Eight (p. 558), Nine (p. 572), Thirteen (p. 645) and Thirteen (p. 657).

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., Chapters Ten (p. 603), Fourteen (p. 671), Fifteen (p. 684), and Seventeen (p. 722).

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., Chapter Ten (p. 610).

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., Chapters Seven (p. 554), Eight (p. 562), and Fourteen (p. 671).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., Chapters Seven (p. 544, p. 554), Eight (p. 558), Nine (p. 571, p. 577), Eleven (p. 625), Twelve (pp. 640-641), Thirteen (p. 654, p. 657), Fourteen (p. 672), and Sixteen (p. 698, p. 702).

<sup>66</sup>The critic, Tang Tao chooses Fei Ming as one of the three prominent writers of the 1940s [the other two are Qian Zhongshu (钱钟书, 1910-) and Shi Tuo (师陀, 1910-1988)], and writes of "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane": "If one wishes to talk about essay-like fiction since the May Fourth, this is a very representative piece." (要说"五四"以来小说散文文化, 这是很有代表性的一篇。) See Tang Tao, "Sishi niandai zhongqi de Shanghai wenxue" 四十年代中期的上海文学, *Wenxue pinglun*, No. 3, 1982, p. 105.

social improvements, the narrator still occasionally alludes to Mr Maybe's sense of alienation as an intellectual in the countryside. In Chapter Eight, when Mr Maybe faces the humourous contradiction in the behaviour of some local Huangmei people who avoid becoming soldiers but name their children "Kangri" (抗日, "Fight Japan") or "Bisheng" (必胜, "Surely Win"), the narrator states: "Seeing everybody do things wrong but want to give right names, Mr Maybe felt very sad at heart; he felt he was lonely in the countryside, he had reason but could not say it clearly." (莫须有先生看着大家做的事都不对, 而名字都要起得对, 心理便很难过, 他觉得他在乡下孤独了, 他是有理说不清了。)67 A clear emotional gap between Mr Maybe and the peasants is indicated by the word, "lonely". These words reveals the cool, analytical, satirical side of Fei Ming in the name of Mr Maybe, while he also shows his full-blooded, emotional side in the narrator's words:

Because of mother's words, Ci also thought of that jujube tree. They really loved Beiping, just as they loved this jujube tree. Therefore, they were really afraid of the disaster of war, but the disaster of war was already happening to them, forcing them to become refugees. Why are there these dreadful facts in life? Oh, lovely place and good honest people; the bellicose, what reason do you bring up to make an excuse for your cruelty?

因了妈妈的话, 慈也怀念起那棵枣树了。他们真爱北平, 正如爱这棵枣树了。因此他们真怕战祸, 而战祸已经临到头上了, 迫得他们做难民了。人生为什么有这些可怕的事实呢? 可爱的地方与善良的人民, 好战者你们拿什么理由做你们残忍的口实呢? 68

Showing things from different angles is one of the characteristics of Fei Ming's stories of the 1920s and the 1930s. Even in this story,

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67 Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 556.

68 *Ibid.*, pp. 581-582 (Chapter Nine).

written in his utilitarian, reformist mode, Fei Ming hardly presents his views in totally black-and-white. Instead, he writes about the wartime situation from the viewpoints of both a critical outsider from Peking and of the intelligentsia, and a sympathetic insider who is a refugee and native of Huangmei.

Furthermore, in Chapter Seventeen, Mr Maybe's slight sense of isolation is described with humour. When Chun returns home from gathering firewood, Mrs Maybe immediately tells him to go and gather another basketful. This is followed by the conversation between Chun, who wishes to hear his mother's praise for collecting a large amount for the first basketful, and Mrs Maybe:

(Chun) "Mummy, aren't there a lot?"

(Mrs Maybe) "Go again!"

(Chun) "Tell me, aren't there a lot?"

(Mrs Maybe) "Go again!"

Mr Maybe by their side felt very lonely; lonely not only for Chun but also for all the artists; how come there is so much vulgarity in the criticisms of the world?

"妈妈, 多不多?"

"再去!"

"你说多不多?"

"再去!"

莫须有先生在旁边十分的寂寞, 不但为纯寂寞, 也为一切的艺术家寂寞了, 世间的批评何以多有世俗气呢? <sup>69</sup>

Thus, Mr Maybe's character still remains emotionally very sensitive and intellectually alert, although he has emerged from the shell of self and plunged physically and mentally into social problems.

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 710.

Another aspect of Mr Maybe which seems unchanged in the sequel is his interest in Buddhism.<sup>70</sup> In fact, the narrator mentions it more frequently than before. He proclaims several times that Mr Maybe is a Buddhist<sup>71</sup>, and sometimes even advocates Buddhism and its idealist view.<sup>72</sup>

It seems that middle-aged Mr Maybe in his forties, who experienced the period of "immersing himself deep among the people", has grown out of his youthful sense of alienation from society. In other words, his vision seems to have widened: his eyes were concentrated on himself when he wrote *The Life of Mr Maybe* fifteen years ago, but now he seems to look at the future of the life of his children and 'the nation'.

"After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane" has been the least acknowledged among Fei Ming's longer stories. Becoming socio-politically aware in his rural native land a few years after undergoing the intense dilemma of Daoist and Confucian ideals in Peking, Fei Ming spoke out his new, reformist views, which enthusiastically supported peasants. However, some of his other political views were totally incompatible with those of the Chinese Communist Party, and thus proved negative against the yardstick of 'desirable literature' after 1949. Also, in spite of some pastoral elements, this story, which is intended to have some historical and

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<sup>70</sup>Confucianism is also mentioned in the story, although it is not 'advocated' as much as Buddhism.

<sup>71</sup>Fei Ming, "Moxuyou xiansheng zuo feiji yihou", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 546 (Chapter Seven) and p. 657 (Chapter Thirteen).

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 617 (Chapter Eleven), p. 647, pp. 651-652 (Chapter Thirteen) and pp. 718-723 (Chapter Seventeen).

educational meanings, is rather banal artistically compared to his previous stories. His distinct poetic quality in the use of language and imaginative leaps, or his unique playfulness with the narrative structure can hardly be found in this last story. It would seem that Fei Ming was a writer whose literary talent was somewhat incompatible with the utilitarian mode.

On the other hand, his works in the individualistic mode, especially his pastoral stories, have inspired some of the most aesthetically renowned modern Chinese writers. This point, which still remains unnoticed, shall be discussed next in the conclusion which will also speculate on Fei Ming's importance in the history of Chinese modern fiction.

## Conclusion

In summary, there are two aspects which distinguish Fei Ming from other modern Chinese fiction writers: his choice of pastoral genre and style. Leo Ou-fan Lee points out: "the May Fourth generation of writers (with a few exceptions) often asserted their individual personalities and life-styles externally against an environment that they found both confusing and alienating."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in some of his earliest short stories, Fei Ming did express a felt tension between individuals and the urban surroundings and depict his characters' opposition to their environments; for instance, in the disappearance of Ruan Ren and the character 'T's letter to his friend, J. T. However, in his major literary achievement, his pastoral fiction of the 1920s and the early 1930s, Fei Ming proved to be one of Lee's "few exceptions". Instead of asserting his individual personality "externally against an environment", he chose to assert it in the creation of his pastoral world where people live in harmony with nature and there is no uneasiness between self and complex urban society. In addition, he elaborated his highly poetic language and experimented with narrative structure, applying some techniques of traditional Chinese poetry and prose. This combination of thematic and stylistic peculiarities makes Fei Ming an unusual writer.

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<sup>1</sup>Leo Ou-fan Lee, "The Solitary Traveler: Images of the Self in Modern Chinese Literature", *Expressions of Self in Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 294.

Now, one might wonder about Fei Ming's position as a writer in a historical context. Questions arise as to the ultimate importance and influence of Fei Ming's works. It is necessary to know whether they are being currently read and if they deserve re-reading. This concluding section will look at Fei Ming as a writer in a wider perspective and attempt to give some answers to such questions. Firstly, a few modern Chinese writers such as Shen Congwen, Bian Zhilin, He Qifang, Wang Zengqi (汪曾祺, 1920-) and He Liwei (何立伟, 1954-) will be compared with Fei Ming to examine his impact or influence on them. Secondly, it will speculate on the answers to the questions posed above and thereby sum up Fei Ming's achievement as a writer of fiction.

### **The influence on Shen Congwen**

Shen Congwen is a writer of the Miao minority nationality<sup>2</sup>, whose exotic regional fiction, such as the short story written in 1929, "Xiaoxiao" ("Xiaoxiao" 萧萧) and the novel written in 1934, *The Border Town* (*Biancheng* 边城)<sup>3</sup>, have come to attract much attention among sinologists in the West as well as in China and Japan, in the last few years.

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<sup>2</sup>More precisely, Shen Congwen's ancestry was mostly non-Han; for his mother was Tujia, and his paternal grandmother was Miao. See Jeffrey C. Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Perhaps reflecting the belated recognition of Shen Congwen's artistic quality in China, both "Xiaoxiao" and *Biancheng* were adapted and cinematized in 1985 as "Xiangnü Xiaoxiao" (湘女萧萧, "Girl from Hunan", directed by Xie Fei 谢飞 and Wu Lan 乌兰) and "Biancheng" (边城, "Border Town", directed by Ling Zifeng 凌子风) respectively.

Shen Congwen, who had begun to create a vivid regional fiction by the end of 1920s<sup>4</sup>, was a good friend of Fei Ming in the 1930s and 1940s, as mentioned in Chapter One. In their fiction writing careers, Shen and Fei Ming shared a similar pattern: during a certain period of their careers they both produced pastoral and satirical stories at the same time. In other words, they looked at the humble life of the country folk in contrast with the bourgeois life of the city-dwelling intellectuals in the late 1920s: more precisely, Fei Ming in 1927-28, and Shen Congwen, 1928 onwards.

Shen Congwen actually attributed his rural lyricism to the influence of Fei Ming in a note attached to his short story, "The Lovers"<sup>5</sup> ("Fufu" 夫妇) published in 1929:

I sometimes really think that I write in two kinds of tones. In one of them, I describe the countryside in a similar way to Mr Fei Ming, which is, to be honest, Mr Fei Ming's influence. But my style is slightly different, as only Mr Fei Ming can be so economical in writing, using the tone of lyrical poetry.

自己有时常常觉得有两种笔调写文章，其一种，写乡下，则仿佛有与废名先生相似处。由自己说来，是受了废名先生的影响，但风致稍稍不同，因为用抒情诗的笔调写创作，是只有废名先生才能那种经济的。<sup>6</sup>

As Shen himself points out here, Shen's language in his stories is generally not as concise as Fei Ming's, and Shen's stories do not contain so many 'gaps' of meaning.

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<sup>4</sup>According to Jeffrey Kinkley, the first known published work by Shen Congwen appeared in December 1924. See *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, p. 72 and p. 388.

<sup>5</sup>The translation of the title is taken from Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen*.

<sup>6</sup>Shen Congwen, "Fufu", *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, Vol. 20, No. 11 (10 November 1929). Also, according to Kinkley, Shen told a Chinese academic, Ling Yu 凌宇 that Fei Ming influenced him heavily. See *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, p. 326.

In his essay, "On Feng Wenbing" ("Lun Feng Wenbing" 论冯文炳)<sup>7</sup>, Shen Congwen also refers to himself as one of the modern writers most similar in tone to Fei Ming, and mentions the following set of stories by Fei Ming and himself to illustrate the difference between the two authors: the collection, *The Peach Orchard*, and the short stories, "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove", "The Monk at the Temple of the Fire God" ("Huoshenmiao de heshang" 火神庙的和尚)<sup>8</sup>, and "A Willow Tree at the Riverside" by Fei Ming; and his own collection, *After Rain, and Other Stories* (*Yuhou ji qita* 雨后及其他)<sup>9</sup>, and the short stories, "The Lovers", "Huiming" ("Huiming" 会明)<sup>10</sup>, "Longzhu" ("Longzhu" 龙朱)<sup>11</sup> and "My Education" ("Wo de jiaoyu" 我的教育).<sup>12</sup> In the essay, Shen suggests that the main difference between the two lies in the fact that the range of settings and characters in his own stories has a wider variety than in Fei Ming's.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Shen Congwen, "Lun Feng Wenbing", *Shen Congwen wenji* 沈从文文集, Vol. 11 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1985), pp. 96-102.

<sup>8</sup>Feng Wenbing, "Huoshenmiao de heshang", *Yu Si*, No. 18 (16 March 1925). The story was written on 28 December 1923 and first collected in *Zhulin de gushi*.

<sup>9</sup>In the essay, Shen referred to the collection as 'Yuhou' (雨后 'After Rain') but actually it was 'Yuhou ji qita'. The collection was published in October 1928. The stories in *Yuhou ji qita* can also be found in *Shen Congwen wenji*, Vol. 2 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1982), pp. 89-138.

<sup>10</sup>"Huiming" was written in 'summer, 1929' and first published in *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, Vol. 20, No. 9 (10 April 1929). It is collected in *Shen Congwen wenji*, Vol. 3 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1982), pp. 269-281.

<sup>11</sup>"Longzhu" was written in 'winter, 1928' and first published in *Honghei* 红黑, Vol. I (10 January 1929). It is collected in *Shen Congwen wenji*, Vol. 2 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1982), pp. 362-383.

<sup>12</sup>"Wo de jiaoyu" was written in 'summer, 1929' and first published in *Xinyue* 新月, Vol. 2, Nos. 6 and 7 (10 April 1929). It is collected in *Shen Congwen wenji*, Vol. 3 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1982), pp. 114-142.

<sup>13</sup>Shen Congwen, "Lun Feng Wenbing", *Shen Congwen wenji*, Vol. 11, pp. 96-102.

Comparing the above mentioned stories of Fei Ming and Shen Congwen, similar tendencies between them as well as some differences can indeed be seen. Both authors stress the importance of spiritual innocence as the prerequisite for attainment of higher human virtues and ascribe to the romantic and Daoist view that without a highly developed intellect one may nevertheless attain instinctive happiness and unconscious wisdom.<sup>14</sup> This is particularly clear in such stories as "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove", "The Peach Orchard", "The Water-chestnuts Marsh" by Fei Ming and "After Rain" ("Yuhou" 雨后), "The Lovers" and "Huiming" by Shen Congwen. However, their ways of presenting it are somewhat different. Fei Ming often suggests his respect for basic, instinctive human nature which surpasses urban sophisticated intellect, in the urbanized intellectual's reminiscent longing for the artless beauty of a young maiden in the countryside as in "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove" or by focusing on the innocence of small children as in "The Peach Orchard". On the other hand, Shen Congwen often shows basic, instinctive human nature more explicitly by asserting the 'animal' instinct of sexual pleasure, as in "After Rain" and "The Lovers".

Furthermore, both Fei Ming and Shen Congwen express sympathy for lower class people, for instance, prostitutes; Fei Ming, in "The Notes of a Vagrant" ("Langzi de biji" 浪子的笔记)<sup>15</sup> which is collected in *The Peach Orchard*, and Shen Congwen in "Baizi" ("Baizi"

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<sup>14</sup>On Shen Congwen, see C. T. Hsia, "Shen Ts'ung-wen (1902-)", *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1961, second edition 1971), pp. 199-200.

<sup>15</sup>"Langzi de biji" was written in 23 April 1927 and first published in *Yu Si*, No. 129 (30 April 1927). It was first collected in *Taoyuan*.

柏子) and "The One Who Was a Man for the First Time" ("Di yi ci zuo nanren de nei ge ren" 第一次做男人的那个人) which are collected in *After Rain, and Other Stories*. Yet, on closer examination, the difference of origin of the two authors seems to be reflected in their narrators' different approaches to the Chinese conventional moral code. Self-taught Miao Chinese, Shen Congwen, who habitually stressed his rural background in contrast to his fellow writers' urban education to account for his dissimilarity from them<sup>16</sup>, challenges the Confucian morals of the 'civilized' culture of the domineering Han (汉) Chinese much more dynamically, as for instance, in the narrator's words in "The One Who Was a Man for the First Time":

Men have fixed up the status of women with such a selfish frame of mind. Yet, only those who have to be prostitutes feel humiliated, which is the power of the Confucian ethical code in China.

男子是这样在一种自私心情中把女子名分给布置下来的，却要作娼的独感到侮辱，这是名教在中国的势力。<sup>17</sup>

Compared to this, the first-person narrator of Fei Ming's "The Notes of a Vagrant" shows his conservatism when he sees the young prostitute, Changyuan (长圆):

Changyuan sat in front of me, and as it was summer, she was not wearing stockings and had a thin gown half draped over her shoulders. I was really not at ease, but widened my eyes

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<sup>16</sup>C. T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, p. 191.

<sup>17</sup>"Di yi ci zuo nanren de nei ge ren", *Shen Congwen wenji*, Vol. 2 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1982), p. 108. Also in "After Rain", Shen positively describes an educated girl's sense of release from the conventional morals which belong to the high culture of the literate people through her sexual experience with the more vital, 'wild', mountain boy, Sigou (四狗, Fourth Dog).

and watched her, and couldn't help thinking; "Women in the world, treasure your chastity: all of you come here and look."  
长圆坐在我的面前，是夏天罢，没有穿袜，单褂半披着。我真不好意思，而我又轮着眼睛看，一面不由己的想——“世间上的女人，你们宝藏你们的童贞，你们都到这来看罢。”<sup>18</sup>

Judging from the context in the story, Fei Ming does not seem to intend to convey an ironical, critical tone about the first-person narrator's behaviour here (that is, the possible hypocrisy of pretending to be moral while staying in a brothel himself). Unlike Shen Congwen, Fei Ming is quite inhibited about the issue of sex and barely describes it in his pastoral stories.<sup>19</sup> The narrator's moralistic comment in this passage may be an indication of Fei Ming's more 'establishmentarian' standpoint as a Han Chinese and a graduate of Peking University.

The critic, Liu Xiwei comments on the difference between Fei Ming and Shen Congwen in *Juhuaqi* (咀华集):

Mr Fei Ming is like a friar and everything is introverted; he seeks a kind of unworldly artistic conception itself, which is a kind of embellished realm interwoven with his thoughts on writing, and not the beautiful objects themselves. Mr Shen Congwen is not a friar. He adores beautiful objects passionately. In his artistic production, he expresses concrete lives which are beautified and reproduced through his passion. The majority of people can appreciate his works, as his ideal in them is something they can accept and something that melts

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<sup>18</sup>Fei Ming, "Langzi de biji", *Fei Ming xuanji*, p. 139.

<sup>19</sup>As mentioned in Chapter Five of this thesis (p. 220), Fei Ming seems to suggest a slight sexual connotation through the image of "a girl's plastron" in the "Poem" chapter of *The Bridge*. Also in the "Maple" chapter of *The Bridge*, he vaguely hints at physical contacts between Xiaolin and Sister Dog (狗姐姐) through their conversations and the narrator's comments such as: "There occurred an important event today" (今天出现了一樁大事; p. 315), and "Readers, hence, there is this maple tree to bear testimony" (看官，于是而有这棵枫树为证; p. 325). However, Fei Ming does not give clear descriptions of sexual matters.

into everyone's life. However, Mr Fei Ming's works, and his artistic conception in them which is a kind of embodiment of abstract thoughts, limit the number of his readers.

废名先生仿佛一个修士，一切是内向的；他追求一种超脱的意境，意境的本身，一种交织在文字上的思维者的美化的境界，而不是美丽自身。沈从文先生不是一个修士。他热情地崇拜美。在他艺术的制作里，他表现一段具体的生命，而这生命是美化了的，经过他的热情再现的。大多数人可以欣赏他的作品，因为他所涵有的理想，是人人可以接受，融化在各自的生命里的。但是废名先生的作品，一种具体化的抽象的意境，仅仅限于少数的读者。<sup>20</sup>

Liu Xiwei is apparently discussing Fei Ming's stories of the 1920s and the 1930s. These differences between Shen Congwen's concrete, practical, passionate approach and Fei Ming's abstract, conceptual, platonic approach are embodied in their descriptions of the 'Land of Peach Blossom'.

In his essay, "The Peach Blossom Spring and Yuanzhou" ("Taoyuan yu Yuanzhou" 桃源与沅州), Shen Congwen describes the real Peach Blossom Spring County (Taoyuan xian 桃源县) in his native Hunan province. At the beginning of the essay, Shen compares the county to Tao Yuanming's "The Peach Blossom Spring" and writes ironically:

For a thousand years or so, the intellectuals' impression of the Peach Blossom Spring hasn't changed much. So, every time a state system weakened and a social upheaval occurred, there must have been many who wished to become loyal adherents to a former dynasty, and this writing also expanded many people's fantasies and drinking capacity. Yet, as for those who live there, no one considers him or herself as a loyal adherent, or an immortal. Nor have they ever met such a person.  
千余年来读书人对于桃源的印象，既不怎么改变，所以每当国体衰弱发生变乱时，想做遗民的必多，这篇文章也就增加了许多人的幻想，增加了许多人的

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<sup>20</sup>Liu Xiwei, "Biancheng -- Shen Congwen xiansheng zuo" 边城——沈从文先生作, *Juhuaiji* (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1936), p. 70.

酒量。至于住在那儿的人呢，却无人自以为是遗民或神仙，也不曾有人遇着遗民或神仙。<sup>21</sup>

Then Shen Congwen depicts the practical, concrete details of the everyday life there of all kinds of people. In alluding to Tao Yuanming in a slightly satirical vein, Shen describes the advantages of the tax system in his Peach Blossom Spring and how prostitutes contribute to the community. Shen chooses to write about extremely down-to-earth matters (even about the prostitutes' catching diseases) and by the end of the essay, clearly expresses his empathy with the masses rather than the intellectuals.

On the other hand, Fei Ming does not describe the practical details of life and people in his pastoral stories of the 1920s and the 1930s, although some of their settings and characters did have models in real life. Fei Ming seems to avoid describing anything which would appear materialistic, physical or too 'worldly' in them. For instance, he does not give full, close pictures of his characters' physical appearances. Nor does he refer to money and sex directly.<sup>22</sup>

These differences arise probably because Fei Ming's pastoral world was the 'symbolic' expression of his private aesthetic

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<sup>21</sup>Shen Congwen, "Taoyuan yu Yuanzhou", *Shen Congwen sanwen xuan* 沈从文散文选 (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1981), p. 137.

<sup>22</sup>In "After Mr Maybe Flew in an Aeroplane", Fei Ming describes a lot of practical details including those concerning money. However, he still sometimes compares Mr Maybe's places of refuge to the Peach Blossom Spring, and also writes: "It was indeed as if Mr Maybe had come here secretly to be an immortal; he was reluctant to leave the fields." See Chapter Seven, p. 337 of this thesis. It seems that Fei Ming was still adopting the "intellectual's impression" in Shen Congwen's terms. Fei Ming's pastoral stories of the 1920s and the 1930s have been concentrated on here, since it was these which Shen Congwen claimed to have influenced him.

aspiration<sup>23</sup>, while Shen Congwen, who took a somewhat opposing attitude against the conventional Han cultural mode, tried to 'explain' in his pastoral stories the beauty of the underestimated, different ways of living with which he was familiar.<sup>24</sup>

### Bian Zhilin and Fei Ming

The poet, Bian Zhilin is also one of the modern writers who came under Fei Ming's literary influence. Bian read Fei Ming's early short stories when he was at middle school in Jiangsu province, and after entering Peking University in 1929 he also read *The Bridge*<sup>25</sup> and *The Life of Mr Maybe* when they were published in the magazine, *Camel Grass*. Around 1933, he became friends with Fei Ming.<sup>26</sup> In

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<sup>23</sup>See Fei Ming's literary view, mentioned in Chapter Five, pp. 200-201 of this thesis.

<sup>24</sup>Yin Weixing 殷卫星 also writes that the different manner in which Fei Ming and Shen Congwen presented the pastoral world stems from the fact that Fei Ming paid attention to expressing his individual taste, and Shen to 'portraying' or 'describing' life. See Yin Weixing, "Lun Fei Ming he Shen Congwen de xiaoshuo chuanguo -- jiantan Zhongguo xiandai shuqing xiaoshuo de tezheng" 论废名和沈从文的小说创作——兼谈中国现代抒情小说的特征, *Zhongguo xiandai, dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, 1990, No. 10, pp. 227-231.

<sup>25</sup>In his letter to me dated 8 August 1989, Bian Zhilin wrote that he had translated two chapters of *The Bridge* into English ("merely for my own English exercise"), and that he still regarded Part One of *The Bridge* as Fei Ming's finest work. ("I still consider the first part of this novel, written with both simplicity and subtlety and published in the early nineteen-thirties in one volume to be Fei Ming's finest book.") The English in the brackets is Bian's original. In *Contemporary Chinese Poetry* published in 1947, Robert Payne also wrote about Bian Zhilin: "He has begun a translation of Feng Fei-ming's 'The Bridge', which may never be completed ..." Fei Ming's *The Bridge* seems to have had an impact on Bian Zhilin. In his note on his own poem, "Rain and I" ("Yu tong Wo" 雨同我), Bian briefly mentioned the similarity between his idea about rain and Fei Ming's by quoting Fei Ming (= "No matter how immense might be the rain poured from the heavens, it could never fill up a flower." [Translated by Bian.] 『不管天下几大的雨, 装不满一朵花。』) in the "Ta" (塔) chapter of *The Bridge*. See "Pien Chih-lin", *Contemporary Chinese Poetry*, ed. Robert Payne (London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd, 1947), pp. 81-82 and p. 95.

<sup>26</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 3.

his preface to *Selected Works of Feng Wenbing*, he states: "It is chiefly from his works of prose fiction that I have derived much aesthetic pleasure of poetry-reading rather than from his [new style poetry] in prose rhythm."<sup>27</sup> (我主要是从他的小说里得到读诗的艺术享受, 而不是从他的散文文化的分行新诗。)<sup>28</sup> Bian seems to have been affected by the typically Southern Chinese folk atmosphere of a little village with water and lush greenery depicted in Fei Ming's stories, with which, being a Southerner himself, he could probably very easily empathize.<sup>29</sup> In 1933, Bian Zhilin wrote a poem entitled "The Dream of the Old Village" ("Guzhen de meng" 古镇的梦) in which he consciously used the title of Fei Ming's short story, "Mao'er's Daddy" ("Mao'er de baba" 毛儿的爸爸) in one line.<sup>30</sup> The poem reads:

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<sup>27</sup>The English translation is Bian Zhilin's own in his letter to me dated 24 December 1988, except the part in parenthesis. Bian's translation has been slightly amended to bring it closer to the spirit of the original. (Bian used the term "poetic lines" instead of "new style poetry".)

<sup>28</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 8. Zhu Guangqian also pointed out the influence of Fei Ming's *The Bridge* on Bian Zhilin's poems. See Meng Shi, "Qiao", *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1 July 1937), p. 188.

<sup>29</sup>Bian Zhilin writes: "Talking of influence, as I have read some of Fei Ming's short stories in the past, perhaps I was affected by some kind of atmosphere in them, but I have not studied his writing skill." (说影响或者过去读过点废名短篇, 感染过那里的一些气氛, 也没有学过他的文字功夫。) He points out that he wrote a short story in 1927 when he was at high school in Shanghai in which he inserted the Southern superstitious expression; "The God of Heaven, the God of the Earth / There's a baby boy who cries at night in my house / The gentleman passing by reads this aloud once / Sleep until waking up in the bright daylight" (天皇皇地皇皇 / 我家有个夜啼郎 / 过路君人吟一遍 / 一觉睡到大天亮), which he also saw in Fei Ming's *The Life of Mr Maybe* published in *Luotuocao* later in 1930 (In Fei Ming's version, 'nian' 念 is used instead of 'yin' 吟. See Chapter Five, p. 229 and footnote 80 in Chapter Six of this thesis). Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 12. According to Bian's letter to me dated 24 December 1988, the quotation of the same expression was mere coincidence and the title of Bian's short story is "Ye zheng shen" (夜正深, "The Night Is Deep"), published under the pen-name, Ji Ling 季陵 in *Huabei ribao fukan* 华北日报副刊 in Peking in 1931. Still, this can probably be taken as an example which shows how closely they shared the experience of, and feeling for, Southern folk customs and atmosphere.

<sup>30</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 12.

In the old village are two kinds of sound,  
The one as solitary as the other:  
During the day the fortune-teller's gong,  
The watchman's wooden clapper in the night....

Unable to shiver the dreams of other folk,  
As in somnambulism,  
The blind man trudges the street,  
Step by step.  
He knows which stone is lower  
And which is higher,  
And the age of the girls in every domicile.

Knocking more deeply into the dreams of others,  
As in somnambulism,  
The watchman paces the street,  
Step by step.  
He knows which stone is lower  
And which is higher,  
And of which house the doors most tightly shut.

"It's midnight hark ye,  
[Mao'er's] papa,  
And still this urchin interrupts one's sleep;  
He always cries in dreams-  
To-morrow must we have his fortune told?"

Midnight, or lonely afternoon:  
The wooden clapper passes over the bridge,  
The gong goes over the bridge, nor ever ceases  
The sound of flowing water underneath.<sup>31</sup>

小镇上有两种声音  
一样的寂寥：  
白天是算命锣，  
夜里是梆子。

敲不破别人的梦，  
做着梦似的

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<sup>31</sup>The translation is by Harold Acton and Ch'en Shih-hsiang in their *Modern Chinese Poetry* (London: Duckworth, 1936), p. 118.

瞎子在街上走，  
一步又一步。  
他知道哪一块石头低，  
哪一块石头高，  
哪一家姑娘有多大年纪。

敲沉了别人的梦  
做着梦似的  
更夫在街上走，  
一步又一步。  
他知道哪一块石头低，  
哪一块石头高，  
哪一家门户关得最严密。

"三更了，你听哪，  
毛儿的爸爸，  
这小子吵得人睡不成觉，  
老在梦里哭，  
明天替他算算命吧？"

是深夜，  
又是清冷的下午：  
敲梆的过桥，  
敲锣的又过桥，  
不断的是桥下流水的声音。32

Bian is apparently not alluding to the content of "Mao'er's Daddy" itself here. In this poem, can be found the serene, secluded atmosphere and scenery of a small old village with a bridge, in a region of rivers and lakes where there are anonymous characters such as a fortune-teller and a blind man, which is reminiscent of those in Fei Ming's pastoral stories, particularly the novel, *The Bridge*.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup>Bian Zhilin, *Diaochong jili* 雕虫纪历 1930-1958 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1982), pp. 53-54.

<sup>33</sup>Bian Zhilin writes that this poem has nothing to do with the content of Fei Ming's story, but it somewhat shares with Fei Ming's early stories descriptions of people and things in the remote mid-South regions of rivers and lakes. See Bian, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 12. He also comments that the poem was written in north China remembering a typical small village in a remote secluded place in *Jiangnan* [=south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River] and that 'under a bridge' (桥下) and 'ceaselessly flowing water' (不断流水) were things that ordinary country folk in the North could hardly see except in the

Furthermore, Bian Zhilin gives the poem a subtly melancholic, lonely mood using the contrast between human affairs and nature effectively, just as Fei Ming does in his pastoral stories<sup>34</sup>. In Bian's poem, the sound of the slow-pacing blind fortune-teller's gong seems to carry a tone of the absurd triviality of everyday life and the sadness of its transience, while the sound of the watchman's wooden clapper and, especially, the sound of flowing water, suggest the perpetual passage of time.

Bian Zhilin also owes his inspiration for the last line of his poem written in 1937, "Naughty" ("Taoqi" 淘气) to the custom of naughty children scribbling silly phrases like 'I'm a cuckold' (我是王八) on the wall to fool passers-by who read them. According to Bian, this 'was very common in Southern China' (南方共同的一种风习) and was described in Fei Ming's novel.<sup>35</sup>

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rainy season in summer in old times. He also explains that in old times there were many large villages (*cun*, 村) in the North, while there were many small villages (*zhen*, 镇) in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions in the South. See Bian Zhilin, "Zixu" 自序, *Diaochong jili 1930-1958*, p. 7. Also, Bian Zhilin, "About My Poems", *Chinese Literature*, August 1981, p. 91.

In her *Modern Chinese Poetry*, pp. 118-129, Michelle Yeh points out the Daoist influence found in the recurrent images of water, dream, and mirror in Bian's poems. In Fei Ming's *The Bridge*, these images can also be found. The images of water and mirror are also frequently found in Fei Ming's poems, as mentioned in Chapter Two of this thesis.

<sup>34</sup>See Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>35</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 12. Fei Ming's novel which Bian refers to must be *The Life of Mr Maybe* where Chapter Ten (p. 87) contains the following passage: "... that wild child at the back of the house scribbled a line 'I'm a cuckold' on my wall: he thinks Mr Maybe will give it a fierce stare as soon as he notices it." (... 房后头那个野孩子还把我的墙上写一个我是王八, 他以为莫须有先生一看就怒目了。)

Furthermore, according to Bian Zhilin's "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, pp. 12-13 and his letter to me dated 8 August 1989, Bian 'fabricated some entirely fictitious episodes in its plot', based on some lines of the 'real' poem Fei Ming had written for him in 1937, "Ji Zhilin" (寄之琳, "To Zhilin"), in his lengthy novel entitled "Shan shan shui shui" (山山水水, "Those Mountains, Those Waters") which he wrote in his spare time for three years during the War of Resistance and later on abandoned. Conversely, in his poetry writing, Fei

## He Qifang and Fei Ming

In his preface to *Selected Works of Feng Wenbing*, Bian Zhilin suggests his close friend, He Qifang's essays were also influenced by Fei Ming.<sup>36</sup> The critic, Liu Xiwei also describes He Qifang as "having escaped Mr Fei Ming's garden and himself opened an unusual bud of a different flower." (逃出废名先生的园圃，别自开放奇花异朵。)<sup>37</sup>

He Qifang had a friendly relationship with Fei Ming in the 1930s<sup>38</sup> and read "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove", "The Peach Orchard" and *The Bridge* closely.<sup>39</sup> Although He does not appear to have

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Ming seems to have received some kind of influence from Bian Zhilin's poetry in the mid-1930s. As this is not within the scope of this thesis, it is sufficient to mention the source of my supposition without analysis: Fei Ming published a poem which he claims to have been written after reading Bian's poem "Daopang" 道旁 in 1935. See Fei Ming, "Shi ji xin" 诗及信, *Shuixing* 水星, Vol. 1, No. 4 (January 1935).

<sup>36</sup>Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 11. In the same preface, Bian also suggests that Shi Tuo's (师陀, 1910-1988) early stories, written in the 1930s under another pen-name, that of Lu Fen 芦焚, were also influenced by Fei Ming. However, Shi Tuo clearly denied Fei Ming's influence in his letter to me dated 23 July 1988, commenting that he had only read three short stories by Fei Ming published in *Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi, xiaoshuo erji* (中国新文学大系, 小说二集) for the first time in 1982.

<sup>37</sup>Liu Xiwei, "Huamenglu", *Juhuaiji*, pp. 193-194.

<sup>38</sup>Bian Zhilin writes that in January 1937, Fei Ming let Bian and He Qifang stay in his house for a few days while he was away visiting his relatives in the South. See Bian Zhilin, "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup>He Qifang has referred very briefly to Fei Ming's indirect way of description in *The Bridge*, in his essay written in 1940, "Lun 'tudi zhi yan'" 论"土地之盐", collected in *He Qifang wenji, er* 何其芳文集, 二 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1982), p. 226. Also, Fang Jing 方敬 writes: "As for modern Chinese stories, Qifang read even more and very quickly ... He read only small numbers carefully. Qifang felt Feng Wenbing's 'A Tale of a Bamboo Grove' and 'The Peach Orchard' to be light and tasteful and there was the delightful serenity of seclusion in their plainness and neatness. He used to like this kind of story." (中国现代小说, 其芳看得更多, 也看得很快 ... 只有少数他细心地读。冯文炳的《竹林的故事》和《桃园》, 其芳觉得冲淡而有味, 素净中见幽趣, 他喜欢过这种小说。) See Fang Jing, "He Qifang de wenxue qingchun" 何其芳的文学青春, *Xin wenxue shiliao*, 1988, No. 1, p. 92.

admitted Fei Ming's influence on his writing<sup>40</sup>, there still seem to be some similarities between He's essays written in 1932-35 which are collected in *A Record of Painted Dreams (Huamenglu 画梦录)*, and Fei Ming's pastoral stories.

For example, some of He's leitmotifs such as dusk, and beautiful young girls, and the lonely mood expressed in his essays, "Mists and Clouds On a Fan" ("Shanshang de yanyun" 扇上的烟云)<sup>41</sup> and "A Rock" ("Yan" 岩)<sup>42</sup> are similar to Fei Ming's. Also, in "Lute-strings" ("Xian" 弦) written in July 1935<sup>43</sup>, He Qifang describes nostalgia, his thoughts about a little girl in his childhood memory, and the sad figure of an old fortune-teller who walks quietly towards the setting sun<sup>44</sup>, which is very reminiscent of some of Fei Ming's pastoral stories: for example, the "Cat" and "Tablet" chapters of *The Bridge*. In "A Building" ("Lou" 楼) written in April 1935, He also depicts rural scenery which resembles Fei Ming's:

Yesterday, we walked to a very far place and finally stopped at a stone bridge beside an old temple. On the bridge was the shadow of a bamboo grove and the sound of the flowing water under the bridge called to mind a cool breeze. I pointed out the towering residence in the distance with its white walls and

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<sup>40</sup>In his letter to me dated 24 December 1988, Bian Zhilin also wrote that he had not personally noticed that He Qifang ever admitted Fei Ming's influence on his early prose writing.

<sup>41</sup>"Shanshang de yanyun" was written in 1936. See He Qifang, *Huamenglu* (Guangdong: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1981), pp. 1-4.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 29-33.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 70-73.

<sup>44</sup>Bonnie McDougall also points out the expression of "gentle nostalgia and a sense of individual destiny" as a characteristic of He Qifang's early essays based on his childhood memories. See Bonnie S. McDougall, trans. and ed., *Paths In Dreams: Selected Prose and Poetry of Ho Ch'i-fang* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1976), p.6, p. 8 and p. 229.

black tiles, and the setting sun was shining upon its high balcony.

昨天，我们散步到很远的地方，最后停在一所古庙侧的石桥上。桥上是竹林的影子，桥下流水响得凉风生了。我遥指一座矗立于白墙黑瓦的宅第间，夕阳照着高楼 ...<sup>45</sup>

Generally speaking, compared to Fei Ming, He Qifang's style seems to be denser and his language more colourful and more decorative. Yet, the two writers seem to share some similar leitmotifs, patterns of imagery and depictions of Southern Chinese country scenery.

### The influence on Wang Zengqi

Among the story-writers who are currently active, Wang Zengqi openly acknowledges Fei Ming's literary influence on his own writing. Wang, who began publishing stories in 1940 when he was a student of Shen Congwen's at Xinan Lianhe University (西南联大)<sup>46</sup>, writes in his essay, "On Style" ("Tan Fengge" 谈风格) that Fei Ming's works were deeply influential on quite a number of young writers of the 1930s and 1940s (especially those in the North)<sup>47</sup>, and that he was certainly one of them.<sup>48</sup> Wang also reveals that he has read all the collections of short stories and novels by Fei Ming and tried to

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<sup>45</sup>He Qifang, "Lou", *Huamenglu*, p. 64.

<sup>46</sup>Wang Zengqi, "Zixu" 自序, *Wang Zengqi duanpian xiaoshuo xuan* 汪曾祺短篇小说选 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1982), p. 1. Also, Zhang Xingjing 张兴劲, "Fang Wang Zengqi shilu" 访汪曾祺实录, *Lianhe wenxue* 联合文学, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1989, 1), p. 40.

<sup>47</sup>Shen Congwen named four young literary aspirants whose style resembled Fei Ming's: Wang Fen 王愤, Li Tongyu 李同愈, Li Mingyan 李明琰, and Li Liancui 李连萃, in his article written in the early 1930s, "Lun Feng Wenbing", p. 102. Bian Zhilin also pointed out the possible influence of Fei Ming on an unknown writer (whose name Bian did not mention) who used to publish essays in 1936 and 1937 in "Xu", *Feng Wenbing xuanji*, p. 11.

<sup>48</sup>Wang Zengqi, "Tan Fengge", *Wenxue yuebao*, No. 6, 1984, p. 67.

absorb Fei Ming's philosophical fusion of Daoism, Chan Buddhism and 'modern Chinese humanism tinged with Confucianism' (溶入儒家思想的中国式的现代人道主义<sup>49</sup>).<sup>50</sup> He further states that he consciously tried to receive nurture from Fei Ming's tender feelings for children expressed in his stories, and from his narrative style.<sup>51</sup>

In his essay written in 1986, "On Language in Stories [Reading Note]" ("Guanyu xiaoshuo yuyan [zhaji]" 关于小说语言 [札记]), Wang Zengqi quotes Fei Ming's words that he wrote stories like the Tang poets wrote *jueju* poems<sup>52</sup>, and positively describes Fei Ming's use of poetic language which creates leaps of meaning.<sup>53</sup> In the same essay, Wang introduces some passages from his own stories such as "Old Friends and Past Events: An Old Man Who Collects Wastepaper" ("Guren wangshi, shouzizhi de laoren" 故人往事, 收字纸的老人) written

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<sup>49</sup>Wang Zengqi's own words. In his essay, "Zibao jiamen" 自报家门 collected in *Puqiaoji* 蒲桥集 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1989), Wang also wrote (p. 365): "I think the Confucianists love people, so I praise myself as a 'Chinese style humanist'. (我觉得儒家是爱人的, 因此我自诩为'中国式的人道主义者'。)"

<sup>50</sup>Wang Zengqi's letter to me dated 13 December 1988.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid. Wang also writes in his letter that he met Fei Ming at Peking University in 1948 but never talked with him.

<sup>52</sup>See Chapter Five, p. 212 of this thesis.

<sup>53</sup>Wang Zengqi, "Guanyu xiaoshuo yuyan (zhaji)", *Wenyi yanjiu*, No. 4, 1986, p. 60. In the essay, Wang describes such use of language in Fei Ming's stories as the "poeticization of language in fiction." ("小说语言的诗化"). Wang also promotes the rediscovery of traditional Chinese literary methods and the idea of blending it with modern ones. He writes: "I feel that we ought not to underestimate our own resources or be familiar with everybody's history but our own. We ought to 'put the old at the service of the new': find new things within our heritage. I particularly recommend that comrades absorbed in Western modernism read some classical works and use the comparative literary method to study ancient Chinese literature. I'm always looking for a fusion of the ancient with the modern and of the native with the foreign." See Wang Zengqi, "We Must Not Forget Our Historical Roots: Popular Literature, Peking Opera, and Modern Prose", trans. Jeffrey Kinkley, *Modern Chinese Writers: Self-Portrayals*, ed. Helmut Martin and Jeffrey Kinkley (Armonk, New York and London, England: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1992), p. 162.

in 1985<sup>54</sup> and "A Fisherman's Child" ("Diaoren de haizi" 钓人的孩子) written in 1982<sup>55</sup> as examples of the use of poetic language in stories, which are namely the self-professed examples of Fei Ming's stylistic influence on him.<sup>56</sup> Besides, Wang Zengqi, who maintains that; "stories are to describe lives, and not to make up tales" (小说是谈生活, 不是编故事)<sup>57</sup>, also shares the same attitude as Fei Ming towards handling plot. Indeed, Wang's early story written in 1944, "Revenge" ("Fuchou" 复仇) does not have a clear plot<sup>58</sup>, and he ascribes this to his intention to break the borders between a story, an essay and a poem.<sup>59</sup>

Like Fei Ming, Wang Zengqi seeks the source of his imagination in his memories, and some of his stories are based on his reminiscences of the past in his hometown in Jiangsu province.<sup>60</sup> His stories published in the early 1980s, such as "Initiation Into Monkhood" ("Shoujie" 受戒)<sup>61</sup> and "A Record of Danao" ("Danao jishi"

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<sup>54</sup>Wang Zengqi, "Guren wangshi", *Xiaoshuo xuankan* 小说选刊, 1986, No. 9, pp. 92-98.

<sup>55</sup>"Diaoren de haizi" was first published in *Haiyan* 海燕, 1982, No. 4. It is collected in *Wang Zengqi zixuanji* 汪曾祺自选集 (Guangxi: Lijiang chubanshe, 1987), pp. 380-384.

<sup>56</sup>Wang Zengqi, "Guanyu xiaoshuo yuyan (zhaji)", *Wenyi yanjiu*, No. 4, 1986, p. 60.

<sup>57</sup>Wang Zengqi, "Qiaobian xiaoshuo sanpian, houji" 桥边小说三篇, 后记, (first published in *Shouhuo* 收获, 1986, No. 2), *Xiaoshuo xuankan*, 1986, No. 7, p. 54.

<sup>58</sup>See Chapter Five, p. 210, footnote 69 of this thesis.

<sup>59</sup>Wang Zengqi, "Zixu", *Wang Zengqi duanpian xiaoshuo xuan*, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup>Zhang Xingjing, "Fang Wang Zengqi shilu", p. 42 and Wang Zengqi, "Renshi dao de he meiyou renshi de ziji" 认识到的和没有认识的自己, *Lianhe wenxue*, Vol. 5 No. 3 (1989, 1), pp. 13-14. Also, in "Qiaobian xiaoshuo sanpian, houji", published in *Xiaoshuo xuankan*, 1986, No. 7, p. 54, Wang writes: "But I think stories are recollections." (但我以为小说是回忆。)

<sup>61</sup>"Shoujie" was written in 1980 and was first published in *Beijing wenxue* 北京文学, 1980, No. 10. It received the 1980 Beijing wenxue award (北京文学奖). It is collected in *Wang Zengqi zixuanji*, p. 223-242.

大淖记事)<sup>62</sup> describe impressionistically the miscellany of the everyday life of 'ordinary' country people such as monks, water-chestnut-sellers, tinsmiths, porters, and soldiers, with a vivid local atmosphere which is enhanced by the dotted rural scenes of paddy fields, rivers, lakes, bamboos, water buffalos and thatched cottages, and the depiction of regional food and folk songs. Apart from the similarities in the choice of theme and characters, the plot-structure of these stories is also very close to Fei Ming's stories: they are fragmentary without causal sequences.<sup>63</sup> In these stories, Wang also shows his warm attitude towards common working people, including their children who are living in accord with nature and local traditions, which seems like a mixture of a Daoist/Chan Buddhist transcendental world-outlook and the Confucian idea of benevolence, and expresses his respect for their old-fashioned spiritual life-style, just as Fei Ming does in his pastoral stories.

Wang Zengqi's expectation of the active reader is also similar to Fei Ming's. Wang writes in his essay, "Self-introduction of My Family" ("Zibao jiamen" 自报家门) that he considers a story to be a joint creation of the author and the reader. (我认为一篇小说是作者和读者

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<sup>62</sup>"Danao jishi" was written in 1981 and was first published in *Beijing wenxue*, No. 4, 1981. It received the 1981 "National Excellent Short Story Award" (全国优秀短篇小说奖) as well as the 1981 Beijing wenxue award. See *Yijiubayi nian quanguo youxiu duanpian xiaoshuo pingxuan huojiang zuopin ji* 1981年全国优秀短篇小说评选获奖作品集, ed. *Renmin wenxue bianjibu* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1982), pp. 232-251.

<sup>63</sup>Wang Zengqi writes: "I think 'literary spirit' is a more intrinsic property and a more profound concept than 'structure', and also more organically bound up with content and thought. It's a superior, very advanced concept, one that's more modern than many of the concepts of modern Western aesthetics. Literary spirit is a direct form of thought." See Wang, "We Must Not Forget Our Historical Roots: Popular Literature, Peking Opera, and Modern Prose", trans. Jeffrey Kinkley, *Modern Chinese Writers: Self-Portrayals*, ed. Helmut Martin and Jeffrey Kinkley, p. 159.

共同创作的。) <sup>64</sup> He comments that the beauty of language lies not in each sentence but in the relationship between them, and that "short stories can be said to be 'the art of gaps'." (短篇小说可以说是"空白的艺术"。) <sup>65</sup> He also maintains that the author should leave some space for the reader to fathom out, speculate and fill in. <sup>66</sup> These ideas of Wang's can be applied directly to characterize Fei Ming's pastoral stories.

### He Liwei and Fei Ming

Wang Zengqi points out in his preface to He Liwei's collection of short stories, *No Stories in a Small Town* (*Xiaocheng wu gushi* 小城无故事), published in May 1986, that He's stories are similar to Fei Ming's ("我觉得立伟的小说与废名有某些相似处") <sup>67</sup> He Liwei himself also admits that he and Fei Ming "have many internal things in common" ("有很多内在的东西颇接近"), and states that he likes Fei Ming very much. <sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Wang Zengqi, "Zibao jiamen", *Puqiaoji*, p. 366.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Wang Zengqi's words quoted in Yang Jianlong's article collected in *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan*, 1990, No. 4, "Jimo de shishen: He Liwei, Fei Ming xiaoshuo zhi bijiao -- Zhongguo xian dangdai zuojia bijiao zhi yi" 寂寞的诗神: 何立伟, 废名小说之比较 -- 中国现当代作家比较之一, p. 198.

<sup>68</sup> He's words quoted in *ibid.* Also, in his article, "Mei de yuyan yu qingdiao" 美的语言与情调, published in *Wenyi yanjiu*, 1986, No. 3, pp. 56-58, He Liwei refers to the beauty of language in Fei Ming's works as well as Wang Zengqi's. Also, in his letter to me dated 4 April 1993, He Liwei writes: "I like Fei Ming ... It can be said that apart from Fei Ming's poems, I like all the other styles of Fei Ming's works. Especially, his early short stories and essays. Fei Ming is one of the writers of the older generation in Chinese modern literature whom I respect and follow very much. His artistic pursuit, which can be said to be almost obstinately persistent, unique stylistic features, his lonely poetic quality, and the upright defiance of a hermit, there is nothing for which I do not yearn." (我喜欢废名。... 可以说, 除开废名的诗, 废名的其他一切文体的作品我都喜欢。尤其是他早期的短篇小说和散文。废名是中国现代文学前辈作家中我非常景从的一位。他的几乎可以说是偏执的艺术追求, 独一无二的风格面目, 他的孤独的诗意, 隐士的清傲, 都莫不会我心向往之。) In the

A relatively young (currently in his late thirties) writer from Hunan province, He Liwei has been attracting the attention of Chinese critics since he began publishing stories in 1983. A comparison of some short stories by He and those by Fei Ming clearly shows similarities between them.

Like Fei Ming, He Liwei also comments on his attempt to write stories in *jueju* style and his emphasis on 'gaps', in his essay, "About 'White Birds'" ("Guanyu 'Baise niao'" 关于《白色鸟》):

I have always thought of trying my hand at writing a kind of short story in *jueju* style ... *Jueju* poetry, like traditional Chinese scholar painting, attaches importance to conciseness, elasticity, suggestiveness, simplicity and elegance, and is especially elaborate in leaving gaps. Only if there is a gap may there arise association where the pen doesn't reach, so one can immediately skip over the narrowness of space and time and obtain infinity.

我一直就想尝试着写一种“绝句”式的短篇小说... 绝句类如中国国画中的文人画，重简约，空灵，含蓄，淡雅，还特讲究留空白。唯其有空白，遂有笔不到而意到的联想，因此方才可能跳脱时空的局促而赢得无限。<sup>69</sup>

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letter, He also gives five aspects of Fei Ming's fiction which he likes: (1) the poetic quality ("shiyi" 诗意 in He's words); (2) the linguistic character ("yuyan gexing" 语言个性). He writes: "I consider Fei Ming as a linguistic experimentalist of his times." (我以为废名在他那个时代是一个语言实验家。); (3) the essay-like nature ("sanwenhua" 散文化); (4) the atmosphere ("qifen" 气氛). He describes it as "a kind of beautiful and distressed atmosphere" ("yi zhong mei he youshang de qifen" 一种美和忧伤的气氛); (5) Beauty ("mei" 美). He writes: "This kind of beauty goes so far as the artistic conception of the whole piece of fiction on the large scale, and the choice of words and building of sentences on the small scale." (这种美大到小说的通篇的意境，小到遣词造句。) In the letter, He also gives the names of his favourite fiction by Fei Ming as *The Bridge*, "A Tale of a Bamboo Grove", "A Washerwoman", "A Willow Tree at the Riverside", "The Peach Orchard", "Si Huo", "The Water-chestnuts Marsh" and "Jujubes".

<sup>69</sup>He Liwei, "Guanyu 'Baise niao'", *Xiaoshuo xuankan*, 1985, No. 6, p. 156.

In this essay, He also writes that he tries to break away from the convention of narrative language.<sup>70</sup>

Reflecting his words, He Liwei's short stories are often 'poetic' in the way that they lack a sense of plot and are charged with imaginative diction, like Fei Ming's pastoral stories. Examples of He's stories without a clear plot would be "The Song the Mason Left Behind" ("Shijiang liuxia de ge" 石匠留下的歌)<sup>71</sup>, "No Stories in a Small Town" ("Xiaocheng wu gushi" 小城无故事)<sup>72</sup> and "White Birds" ("Baise niao" 白色鸟)<sup>73</sup>. In these stories, nothing melodramatic happens, and everyday events which do happen do not form any causal sequences. Such plotless structure can be found also in his story published in 1985, "One Night, Three Passings" ("Yi xi san shi" 一夕三逝) which consists of three short episodes, "An Empty Boat" ("Kong chuan" 空船), "Old Street" ("Laojie" 老街) and "A Floral Dream" ("Hua meng" 花梦).<sup>74</sup> Although these three episodes are linked with a common theme (that is, someone's death or disappearance) and setting (on the same evening in the same riverside town in Southern China), they are all very sketchy and can be read as independent pieces, just as each chapter in Fei Ming's *The Bridge* can be. Besides, none of the three episodes in "One Night, Three Passings" describes the reason why the

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid. In He's own words; "I attempt to break a little the convention of narrative language, including grammar." (我企图打破一点叙述语言的常规(包括语法)).

<sup>71</sup>First published in *Renmin wenxue* 人民文学, 1983, No. 6, pp. 53-55.

<sup>72</sup>First published in *Renmin wenxue*, 1983, No. 9, pp. 33-35.

<sup>73</sup>First published in *Renmin wenxue*, 1984, No. 10, pp. 70-73. It received the 1984 "National Excellent Short Story Award".

<sup>74</sup>First published in *Renmin wenxue*, 1985, No. 9. It is collected in *Tansuo xiaoshuo ji* 探索小说集, ed. Shanghai wenyi chubanshe (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1986), pp. 474-486.

people (in "An Empty Boat", a couple; in "Old Street", an eighteen year old girl called Chun'e (春娥); and in "A Floral Dream", a young man) either commit suicide or disappear. He Liwei concentrates on describing scenery impressionistically and expressing a flowing atmosphere rather than 'story-telling'. Even the story's theme of 'death' is allusively overlaid with his indirect, symbolic description of transient, drifting images such as flickering lights reflected in water, grass flowing in a river and a flower floating in the air, gradually falling.

Like Fei Ming in his pastoral stories, in these stories, He Liwei tries to convey to the reader the association of images by using metaphorical language<sup>75</sup> and leaves suggestive gaps. For example, He finishes the story, "White Birds" with a depiction of two water birds flying away in fright at the sound of a gong struck to herald a public accusation meeting (斗争会). "White Birds" is about two boys

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<sup>75</sup>On close examination, He Liwei also has his own characteristic use of language such as abundant use of reiterative locution; for example, "Yet, he drank tea silently, smoked silently and rested silently. The smoke, which was puffed out from his nostrils and mouth, was thickly dense, stingingly biting, and also silent." ("Ta que momo hecha, momo xiyan, momo xieqi. Cong bikong li koujiao li penchu de yanyun nongnong de, lala de, ye shi momo de." 他却默默喝茶, 默默吸烟, 默默歇憩。从鼻孔里口角里喷出的烟云浓浓的, 辣辣的, 也是默默的。) In "Shijiang liuxia de ge" (in *Renmin wenxue*, 1983, No. 6, p. 54). He seems to be especially fond of the expression "Glancingly" ("linlin [shanshan]" 粼粼 [闪闪]) as he often uses it; for example, in "Yixi sanshi" (in *Tansuo xiaoshuo ji*, p. 475), "Baise niao" (in *Renmin wenxue*, 1984, No. 10, p. 71) and "Xiaocheng wu gushi" (in *Renmin wenxue*, 1983, No. 9, p. 35). He also enjoys onomatopoeia; for example, "The sussurating sound of cicadas increased in intensity." ("Chan sheng sisisi jiao de jin." 蝉声嘶嘶嘶嘶叫得紧。) in "Baise niao" (in *Renmin wenxue*, 1984, No. 10, p. 70) and "Gulp gulp gulp gulp, down to the stomach ..." ("Huohuhuohuo he xia du ..." 霍霍霍霍喝下肚 ...) in "Xiaocheng wu gushi" (in *Renmin wenxue*, 1983, No. 9, p. 34). It is virtually impossible to reproduce such reiteration in English. As has already been shown in the passage quoted from *The Bridge* in Chapter Five, pp. 245-246 of this thesis, Fei Ming also occasionally uses reiterative locution for a poetic effect. However, He Liwei invents much more unusual phrases and uses them far more frequently than Fei Ming.

playing together at a quiet rural waterside in Southern China in summer, and before the ending, the boys' genuine, artless wonder at the serene sight of the beautiful birds is described. This way, instead of bringing to the story a concrete definite ending, He suggestively refers to the sound of social disorder (the Cultural Revolution) in contrast to the children's innocence and tranquil, unspoiled nature, and leaves some room or a 'gap' for the reader to mull over the meaning. Like Fei Ming, He Liwei also seems to expect the reader to participate in completing the picture of his fictional world.

He Liwei nostalgically and positively presents everyday life in the old-fashioned countryside in Southern China from a city-country perspective, which is reminiscent of Fei Ming's pastoral stories. For example, in "White Birds", he describes the pleasure of rural summer from the different perspectives of the two boys who have been brought up in a city and in the countryside respectively. When the city boy exclaims at the natural beauty of the riverside, the country boy says: "Only those who come from the city can say it's beautiful." ("城里来的才讲它好看。") Furthermore, in "No Stories in a Small Town", He writes positively about the life of 'ordinary', self-contained, tender-hearted people in a small town in contrast to the intrusiveness of curious travellers from a large city.

In "The Song the Mason Left Behind" and "White Birds", he also chooses to write about the outside world from innocent children's point of view, which Fei Ming also does in "The Peach Orchard" and *The Bridge*.

Judging from these similarities and He's fondness for Fei Ming's stories, it seems appropriate to locate the contemporary writer, He

Liwei's poetic stories in the same vein as Fei Ming's.<sup>76</sup> It seems particularly so, as He himself states: "Fei Ming's contribution to modern Chinese literature, that is, developing a new style of his own, not only brings the junior student(s) an inspiration but also courage. That is to say; one must insist on artistic individuality." (废名对现代中国文学的独辟蹊径的贡献, 不仅给后学带来启发, 也同时带来勇气。这就是, 必须坚持艺术的个性。) <sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup>Yang Jianlong suggests in his article, "Jimo de shishen: He Liwei, Fei Ming xiaoshuo zhi bijiao -- Zhongguo xian dangdai zuojia bijiao zhi yi" (p. 205): "Poetic fiction has been overlooked all along. It is only now with He Liwei's work that someone has genuinely succeeded to the tradition of poetic fiction Fei Ming cultivated, and developed poetic fiction into a new state." (诗化小说的创作一直为人们所漠视, 直至文学的新时期, 何立伟的小说创作, 才真正延续了由废名开拓的诗化小说的传统, 并将诗化小说的创作, 拓展到一个新的境界。) It is not clear whether Yang has considered Wang Zengqi's poetic fictions, many of which are earlier than He Liwei's. However, at least I agree with his view that He Liwei writes in the tradition of poetic fiction which Fei Ming elaborated.

<sup>77</sup>He Liwei's letter to me dated 4 April 1993. In response to my question about Fei Ming's influence, He Liwei replied in the letter that: "It was not until summer 1985 when I was on a ferry travelling through the Three Gorges along the Yangtze River that I came to read *Selected Works of Feng Wenbing* ... But when I read Fei Ming's fiction, I was not only surprised at the similarities between my own works and his, but it also made me ponder a problem of the inheritance of literary tradition. I felt myself, A Cheng as well as Mr Wang Zengqi, all have our own different perceptions of, and succession to, the traditional aesthetic spirit in Chinese literature. In this succession, Mr Fei Ming's and my approaches are the closest. Therefore, it is not so much Fei Ming giving me an influence as the artistic conception of Chinese classical poetry giving me the idea of implementing it in modern fiction. When I read Fei Ming's fiction, my basic literary view and method had already been fixed. Reading Fei Ming's fiction did not change my view and method, but strengthened further my own choice. The influence Fei Ming has given me is to make me even more confident. I have realized where the value of my efforts could come to stand." (我是1985年夏在游三峡的船上才读到《冯文炳小说选》[sic]的。...但我读废名的小说时, 不但惊异于我自己作品同他的相似, 而且使我思考了一个文学传统继承的问题。我觉得我也好, 阿城也好, 包括汪曾祺先生也好, 都对中国文学的传统审美精神有各自不同的感悟和承接。这承接中我与废名先生的路子最为接近。所以, 与其说是废名对我产生了影响, 无宁说是中国古典诗歌的意境对我产生了把它移植在现代小说上的想法。我读废名小说时, 我的基本的文学观念和写作方式已确定下来。读废名的小说并没有改变我的观念和方式, 而是更加坚定了我自己的选择。废名给我的影响是使我更加自信。我认识到我的努力的价值将会体现立什么地方。) He Liwei wrote "*Feng Wenbing xiaoshuoxuan*" (《冯文炳小说选》, *Selected Stories of Feng Wenbing*), but it seems to be mistaken for *Feng Wenbing xuanji* (冯文炳选集, *Selected Works of Feng Wenbing*). A Cheng (阿城, 1949-) is a celebrated novelist who is currently very active.

Besides the above-mentioned writers, Fei Ming's impact on other Chinese writers has been quite considerable, but this is still very little noticed by contemporary critics. Among the very few critics who mark the importance of Fei Ming, Yan Ping (燕平) writes:

Fei Ming, this eccentric name, may perhaps sound very unfamiliar to some young readers. However, in the 1920s, he was highly thought of among the literary world for his peculiar artistic style, and was a very influential well-known writer.  
废名, 这个怪僻的名字, 对于部分青年读者来说, 也许是很感陌生的, 但在二十年代, 他却以独特的艺术风格引起文坛重视, 是一位颇有影响的知名作家。<sup>78</sup>

In fact, it was not only in the 1920s that Fei Ming was valued seriously. During the 1930s, Fei Ming's pastoral stories, especially *The Bridge*, seem to have been much appreciated by other writers such as Zhu Guangqian<sup>79</sup> and Li Jianwu.<sup>80</sup> Among his contemporaries, Fei Ming seems to have been known as a stylist. For example, Harold Acton and Ch'en Shih-hsiang commented on Fei Ming's stylistic achievement in 1936: "His prose is written in a style deliberate and fastidious, intensified by evasive visions so subtly expressed, that he may justly be said to have raised [*baihua*] to a

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<sup>78</sup>Yan Ping, "Fei Ming: Yi zhi pingdan er pusu de bi" 废名 一支平淡而朴素的笔, *Xiandai zuojia sishi ren* 现代作家四十人 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1986), p. 133. Dang Shengyuan and Gao Jie also mark Fei Ming's importance: "Fei Ming is not one of the great masters of Chinese writing but deserves a place for his uniqueness and intelligence. His individual artistic search will never pall. Indeed the line from Zhou Zuoren via Fei Ming to Shen Congwen constitutes an important facet of contemporary Chinese literature which is arousing more and more interest." See Dang Shengyuan and Gao Jie, "About Fei Ming", trans. Li Guoqing, *Chinese Literature*, Spring 1990, p. 127.

<sup>79</sup>Meng Shi (=Zhu Guangqian), "Qiao", *Wenxue zazhi*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1 July 1937) See Chapter Five, p. 182 of this thesis.

<sup>80</sup>Li Jianwu (= Liu Xiwei) has described himself as "a fan of *The Bridge*" (桥的爱好者). See Liu Xiwei, "Huamenglu", *Juhuaqi*, p. 192.

higher level."<sup>81</sup> The writer, Shi Zhecun (施蛰存, 1905-) also wrote in 1937: "Talking of stylists in the world of Chinese New Literature, perhaps Mr Fei Ming must be put first." (谈到中国新文坛中的文体家, 废名先生恐怕应当排列在第一名了。)<sup>82</sup>

Even during the political turmoil and suppression in China endemic after the 1940s, the influence of Fei Ming's pastoral fiction did not die out. As mentioned earlier, Wang Zengqi testifies that Fei Ming's works were deeply influential on quite a number of young writers of the 1940s. As a matter of fact, his influence seems to be still continuing now in the works of some celebrated, currently very active writers.<sup>83</sup> The reason for the persistence of Fei Ming's influence must lie in its very apolitical nature, or 'literary' literariness, which stubbornly puts aesthetic lyrical quality and stylistic interest first. In other words, Fei Ming's pastoral fiction has

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<sup>81</sup>Harold Acton and Ch'en Shih-hsiang, "Biographical Notes", *Modern Chinese Poetry*, p. 161.

<sup>82</sup>Shi Zhecun, "Yiren yishu" 一人一书, *Yuzhoufeng* 宇宙风, No. 32 (1 January 1937).

<sup>83</sup>Liu Xudong 刘旭东 suggests the influence of Fei Ming's pastoral stories on the stories of Jia Pingwa (贾平凹, 1953-) who has been remarkably prolific since the late 1970s. See Liu Xudong, "Tianyuan de bianzou: Jia Pingwa yu Sun Li de shuqing xiaoshuo" 田园的变奏: 贾平凹与孙犁的抒情小说, *Xiatian de shenmei chujiao -- dangdai daxuesheng de wenxue yishi* 夏天的审美触角 -- 当代大学生的文学意识, ed. Chen Sihe 陈思和 (Beijing: Gongren chubanshe, 1987), pp. 116-133. Meng Shi 孟实 also suggests Fei Ming's possible influence on the currently active writer, Lin Jinlan (林斤澜, 1923-) in "'Wo shi mengzhong chuan caibi' -- Fei Ming lue shi" "我是梦中传彩笔" -- 废名略识, *Dushu* 读书, No. 10, 1990, p. 34. (This Meng Shi does not seem to be Zhu Guangqian who uses the same pen-name, because the article was written after Zhu's death.) Also, (although He Liwei denies it in his letter to me dated 4 April 1993) Wang Zengqi suggests Fei Ming's influence on another currently active writer, A Cheng 阿城. See Yan Jiayan 严家炎, *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo liupai shi* 中国现代小说流派史 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1989), p. 226.

a universal quality which moves serious readers of pure literature<sup>84</sup> beyond the boundary of time (and place).

In spite of this, Fei Ming still remains a dark horse and is generally not widely read. Anti-social loner as he might have appeared so far in the history of modern Chinese literature still largely written from the biased viewpoint imposed since Mao Zedong's Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942, Fei Ming now certainly deserves his proper status as one of the pioneering modern pastoral fiction-writers and as an eccentric influential stylist. His works have begun to be republished since the mid-1980s. It is now up to us to re-read and re-evaluate him justly.

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<sup>84</sup>By 'pure literature', I mean literature which excludes popular fiction and propaganda, and which eschews sheer entertainment and utilitarian values.

## Bibliography

### Abbreviations

FW ... Feng Wenbing 冯文炳.

FM ... Fei Ming 废名.

FWX ... *Feng Wenbing xuanji* 冯文炳选集.

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