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The search for cultural identity: Taiwan "hsiang-t’u" literature in the seventies

Chen, Ai-Li, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1991

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THE SEARCH FOR CULTURAL IDENTITY: TAIWAN "HSIANG-T'U"
LITERATURE IN THE SEVENTIES

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Ai-Li Chen, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

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To My Mother
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In this study, I shall propose a historical definition of Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature instead of the ethnic one.

The development of modern Chinese literature has been divided into two branches since 1949 when Communists took over China and Nationalists retreated to Taiwan. For the last four decades, literature in China and Taiwan has followed two separate courses under two different socio-political systems, while the cultural affinity between them remains identifiable and sometimes significant.

The socio-politico-cultural relationship between China and Taiwan since 1949 is, to a certain degree, a reminder of a similar situation which occurred during the period of 1895 to 1945, when Taiwan was under Japan's colonial rule. In the Occupation Period, Taiwan's colonial status resulted in a crisis of cultural identity among its people. On the one hand, they had no way to escape completely from the impact of the colonial policy of "Japanization", while their
attempt to preserve their cultural ties with China was inevitably impeded by the political reality on the other. During the course of the Occupation Period, the Chinese consciousness of people in Taiwan was finally challenged by their Taiwanese consciousness which underscored the regionalism of Taiwanese culture and perceived Taiwanese culture more as an independent entity. It was in the context of this Taiwanese consciousness that the term "hsiang-t'u" literature came into being in the 1930s. Thus, by its nature, Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature refers strictly to literary works written by Taiwanese writers. The exclusionism manifest in the term "hsiang-t'u" literature is comparable to that in the term "black literature" in America. The closest English rendition of "hsiang-t'u" literature would be "nativist literature" instead of "homeland literature" proposed by some literary critics. Since most scholars have retained the term "hsiang-t'u" literature instead of using its English translation in their discussions of the subject, I shall follow this convention throughout this study.

"Hsia-t'ou" literature is certainly not a unique Taiwanese phenomenon. In China, the similar literary trend rose around the twenties and was designated by Lu
Hsun as "hsiang-t'"u" literature in the thirties. From the thirties on, the development of "hsiang-t'"u" literature in China and Taiwan has been parallel but followed their own courses.

Almost four decades had elapsed when the term "hsiang-t'"u" literature reappeared on the Taiwan literary scene in the seventies. Similar to the thirties, the seventies were a historical juncture when Taiwan society experienced another crisis of political and cultural identity. The nature of the crisis in the seventies was quite different from the previous one due to its different socio-politico-economic context.

Generally speaking, the seventies were an important transitional period in Taiwan society. In the economic sphere, Taiwan was transforming from a primarily agricultural society into an industrial one. Although industrialization helped speed up the pace of Taiwan's modernization, it simultaneously precipitated the disintegration of traditional beliefs and values inherent in agricultural society. On the diplomatic front, the Taiwan government suffered a series of setbacks in the seventies. The more significant ones included Taiwan's withdrawal from the United Nations in 1971 and the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the
United States and the People's Republic of China in 1979. When the People's Republic of China gradually emerged as China's only legitimate government in the international arena, people in Taiwan began to rethink the nature of Taiwan's political identity. Despite the government's insistence on its legitimacy of representing China, Taiwan has, under many circumstances, reluctantly become more like an independent political entity since the 1970s.

A similar dilemma can also be discerned in the phenomenon of "hsiang-t'u" literature. While "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians often rhetorically equated "hsiang-t'u" literature with "national literature", the reality reflected in the literature itself was in fact confined to that of Taiwan rather than the Chinese reality as a whole. So while some "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians, such as Ch'en Ying-chen 陳映真, Yu T'ien-ts'ung 尤天聰, and Wang T'o 王拓, shared a strong sense of "Chinese consciousness" and a common political ideal, calling for a great, reunited China, there were other advocates of "hsiang-t'u" literature, such as Yeh Shih-t'ao 葉石濤, and Sung Tung-yang 宋冬陽, who stressed "Taiwanese consciousness" over "Chinese consciousness," partly because of the current political
reality and partly because of Taiwan's colonial past which had separated Taiwan from China. Although the dispute between these two groups of people did not occur until 1984, a split of consciousness has underlain Taiwan "hsiang-t'ü" literature since the Occupation Period and will continue to be a political as well as cultural issue among the intellectuals in Taiwan.

In addition to the controversy over "Chinese consciousness" and "Taiwanese consciousness", the crisis of cultural identity in Taiwan in the seventies was further complicated by the issue of modernization. What accompanied modernization was a tremendous cultural transformation. The traditional culture was gradually giving way to the modern one, while the indigenous culture was contending with the foreign one. To a Third World country like Taiwan, modernization is in many significant ways an equivalent of westernization. How to adapt oneself to modernization and at the same time preserve one's own cultural identity seems to be a common question haunting many intellectuals in the Third World.

Moreover, Taiwan, as a member of global capitalist system, shares with many Third World countries the experience of being exploited by the advanced capitalist
countries. The sense of world class consciousness has formed a kind of "cosmopolitanism" which also played a role in Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies. Thus, the paradoxes in Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies were not only "Chinese consciousness" vs. "Taiwanese consciousness" and "Chinese consciousness" vs. "cosmopolitanism" and "Taiwanese consciousness" vs. "cosmopolitanism".

Due to the long-term politico-economic dependency on the United States, westernization in Taiwan refers, to a great extent, to Americanization. American values, such as individualism, human rights, and democracy, penetrated into Taiwan society by way of publishing and modern communications. One side effect was many people's preference for or even blind faith in things of American origin. The most conspicuous link between the theory of "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians and the works of three "hsiang-t'u" writers to be discussed in this study lies in their shared nationalistic stance and their condemnation of those who are overly westernized or Americanized. Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies, as a reaction against the total westernization of modernist literature in the sixties,
can be considered as an effort to reaffirm the values of traditional Chinese culture.

Seen in a broader context, the cultural dilemma of intellectuals in Taiwan in the seventies was only a variation of a general theme in modern Chinese history: how to absorb the strength of Western culture without losing the quintessence of Chinese culture. Lin Yu-sheng in his *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness* pointed out that the intrusion of Western civilization had been one dominant fact standing behind many intellectual phenomena in the last one hundred forty years of Chinese history. "Acceptance of Western ideas and values" he further observed, "was by and large predicated on Chinese nationalism, which in turn emerged as a direct response to the challenge of Western intrusion."

As for how to assimilate Western ideas and values, Chang Chih-tung (1837-1909) 張之洞, one of the most important reformers in the Ch'ing Dynasty, has suggested the principle of "Chung-hsueh wei t'i, hsi-hsueh wei yung" 中學為體，西學為用 (Chinese learning for substance, Western learning for function) to cope with the dilemma resulting from the intrusion of Western civilization. In Chang's catch-phrase, he "used
'substance' in reference to traditional Chinese values, and 'function' (i.e., utility, practical application) in reference to the Western methods by which China and its traditional way of life were to be defended in the modern world." His principle fully revealed many Chinese intellectuals' shared concern that traditional Chinese values might be uprooted in the process of modernization if the assimilation of Western values were not confined to inessential spheres. He seemed to imply that the direction of westernization could be completely dictated by human will and "misjudged the frictions and tensions which modernization would create within the old order."8

The "t'i-yung" formula was intended to defend the core of Chinese civilization, it nevertheless was caught in the trap of its own dichotomy. As Levenson has pointed out:

Chinese learning, which was to be the "t'i" in the new syncretic culture, was the learning of a society which had always used it for "yung", as the necessary passport to the best of all careers. Western learning, when sought as "yung", did not supplement Chinese learning—as the neat formula would have it do—but began to supplant it. For in reality, Chinese learning had come to be prized as substance because of its function, and when its function was usurped, the learning withered. The more western learning came to be accepted as the practical instrument of life and power, the more Confucianism ceased to be "t'i", essence, the naturally believed-in value of a civilization without a rival, and
became instead an historical inheritance, preserved, if at all, as a romantic token of no-surrender to a foreign rival which had changed the essence of Chinese life.  

The development of "hsiang-t'u" literature, whether it be Chinese version or Taiwanese version, can be seen as a literary variation of the "t'i-yung" formula. Although the substance of "hsiang-t'u" literature is indigenous, "hsiang-t'u" writers often resort to western literary techniques to present their subject matters and convey their ideas. The more western literary techniques are utilized in this literature, the less indigenity it preserves. In this study, Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies will be used as an example to explore the tension between "substance" and "function" or that between "tradition" and "innovation."

The introduction of and experimenting with western modernist literature in China was in fact an effort of "modernization" in the literary sphere. Modernist poetry was first experimented with by a small group of poets in China around 1930, and modernist fiction became popular only during 1960s in Taiwan. The popularity of modernist literature was soon replaced by the realistic trend of "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies, thereby reversing their order of appearance not only in
19th-century Europe but also 20th-century China, where realism preceded modernism. The realistic tradition of "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies can be traced back to its pioneer counterpart in the Occupation Period or even further to nineteenth century Europe.\(^{11}\)

Realism, as Marston Anderson observed, was preferred as a literary mode by the Chinese reformers of both the late Ch'ing period and the May Fourth period "in part because of its scientism, in part because realist works took as their subjects a far wider range of social phenomena than earlier, more aristocratic forms did."\(^{12}\) Realism also served the need of "hsiang-t'u" writers, whether in depicting social reality or by exploring and criticizing social problems to urge reforms.

Politically speaking, "hsiang-t'u" literature stands for a progressive force which is confronted more directly with socio-political issues, while modernist literature often shies away from them. Culturally speaking, however, "hsiang-t'u" literature represents a conservative force which clings more to indigenous culture and resists Western influences. Can "hsiang-t'u" literature really resist Western literary influence? How does "hsiang-t'u" literature relate to the Chinese literary tradition, especially that of the May Fourth
Period? How much regionalism is there in "hsiang-t'u" literature? These are the major lines which I shall attempt to trace in this study.

Structurally, this study will be divided into two parts and each part contains three chapters. The first part deals with the historical background of "hsiang-t'u" literature. The first two chapters trace the very origin of "hsiang-t'u" literature and sees its development from the Occupation Period down to the seventies in the light of socio-political-cultural interaction. The third chapter focuses on the debate over "hsiang-t'u" literature with the intent to reveal the theoretical underpinning of "hsiang-t'u" literature as well as the fundamental difference between modernism and realism as these movements figure in the Taiwanese context. The debate about "hsiang-t'u" literature, though essential for understanding the context in which it flourished, is inadequate for revealing the complexity of the literature itself. "Hsiang-t'u" literature is not simply a matter of anti-imperialism as "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians claimed but also a case of experimenting with western form (social or political realism vs. the pastoral of Occupation-period literature; modernism itself). In order to see what
issues are actually at stake and ultimately what
definition of "hsiang-t' u" literature emerges from the
literary works themselves, the need to move beyond the
debate to the literature itself is begging. Thus, in the
second part of this study the literature itself is
dealt with against the backdrop of the debate and the
socio-historical context laid out in Part I.

Three "hsiang-t' u" writers, Hwang Chun-ming
黃春明, Wang Chen-ho 王振和 and Ch'en Ying-
chen are chosen not only because they are the best known
but also because their works demonstrate the
characteristics of a transition period and provide
instances of western influence on "hsiang-t' u"
literature. Hwang Chun-ming's stories are a good source
of understanding the rural-urban transition and effects
on narrative stance, while Wang Chen-ho and Ch'en Ying-
chen are writers influenced by western modernism yet
trying to engage in the "hsiang-t' u" tradition. Three
writers will be discussed in the order of Hwang Chun-
ming, Wang Chen-ho, and Ch'en Ying-chen and in terms of
"narrator's stance" to reveal the rural-urban-
cosmopolitan transition and to relate them to social
context of the historical transition period to which
they belong.
Through the discussion of the literary works of three representative "hsiang-t'u" writers as well as the related intellectual and literary phenomena, I hope to delineate the general contour of "hsiang-t'u" literature and situate it in the context of modern Chinese literature as well as third-world literature and culture.
Notes to Introduction


2. See Ch'en Chi-hui's Li-hsing te hsiao chang (The Waning and Waxing of Rationality), (Chung-yuan nung-min, 1989), p. 18 and Lu Hsun's preface to Chung-kuo hsin wen-hsueh ta hsi: hsiao-shuo erh-chi. In Lu Hsun's definition, "hsiang-t'u" literature was an equivalent of "homeland literature".


6. Ibid.


8. Ibid.


PART I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
CHAPTER I

What is Taiwan "Hsiang-t'u" Literature?

In the middle of the feverish debate over Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the 1970s, some writers and critics began to feel the need for clarifying the definition of the term itself. Chung Chao-cheng, a postwar "hsiang-t'u" writer, for instance, expressed his view:

It is very unlikely, I think, to give a strict definition of "hsiang-t'u" literature, because there is no such thing as so-called "hsiang-t'u" literature. In a broader sense, all literary works are tied to their "hsiang-t'u" (homeland). No single literary work can separate itself from its homeland.... A writer has to base on a ground when he or she writes, this ground is precisely his or her "hsiang-t'u". Perhaps, I would rather call it "feng-t'u" (endemicity) instead.... When people refer to "hsiang-t'u", their attention tends to focus on the word "hsiang" (countryside). Thus, they interpret "hsiang-t'u" as something rural and rustic. I can not agree with them on this interpretation at all. As for "feng-t'u", you can possess it even you dwell in a city. Whatever line your work might take, you simply can not do without "feng-t'u".1

17
"Hsiang-t'u" seems to mean "homeland" or "native place" to Chung. In his opinion, "hsiang-t'u" literature deals not only with rural subject matters but urban ones as well. In order to avoid misinterpretations, he recommends the term "feng-t'u" to replace "hsiang-t'u".

Wang T'o, another "hsiang-t'u" writer as well as theoretician, agreed with Chung's general definition of "hsiang-t'u" but suggested another term "hsien-shih chu-i wen-hsueh" 現實主義文學 (realist literature) to replace "hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh". He contended:

This kind of literature (i.e. "hsiang-t'u" literature) depicts not merely peasants and workers but national entrepreneurs, small merchants, free lance professionals, government employees, teachers, and various kinds of people who struggle for their livelihood in the industrial and commercial society. In other words, people, things, and phenomena of any kind, as long as they originate in this society, they are the subjects that this kind of literature attempts to reflect and delineate and that the authors of this kind of literature attempt to understand and be concerned with. This kind of literature, in my view, should be called "realist" literature instead of "hsiang-t'u" literature; moreover, in order to avoid conceptual confusion and emotional misunderstanding and confusion, it is necessary to rename currently so-called "hsiang-t'u" literature as "realist" literature.²

Both Chung Chao-cheng and Wang T'o seem to try hard to avoid narrowing the definition of "hsiang-t'u" literature down to "rural literature". Their definitions
of "hsiang-t'u" literature, however, are too vague and broad to characterize and specify the particular literary trend which was the focal issue of the debate in the mid 1970s.

Literary critic Yeh Shih-t'ao in his "T'ai-wan hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh-shih tao-lun" defines Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature as "the literature written by the Han and other native peoples who inhabit Taiwan." According to him, Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature should be characterized by its deep-rooted "Taiwanese consciousness." Yeh further interprets "Taiwanese consciousness" as "the shared experience of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism" since Taiwan has had a long history of being colonized and oppressed.3

Based on Yeh's definition given above, the English equivalent of "hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh" would be "native literature" or "regional literature". Despite the reluctance of people like Chung Chao-cheng and Wang T'o to use the term "hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh", it is still the most widely used term when referring to the body of writings which aroused great controversy in Taiwan
literary circles in the mid seventies. Although this body of writings can be characterized in various ways, such as "social realist literature", "national literature", etc, the most noticeable trait shared by these works is that they were exclusively done by native Taiwanese writers.

As Yeh Shih-t'ao has pointed out, the heritage of Taiwan "hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh" can be traced back to the Japanese Occupation Period (1895-1945) when a new literature movement began to burgeon. Thus, in order to facilitate the later discussion, it is necessary here to provide the origin of "hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh" and the historical context in which it was first proposed.

The term "hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh" was first mentioned by Cheng K'un-wu 蕭崑五 in 1930. It was the time when Taiwan had been under Japanese colonial rule for more than three decades. The colonial status of Taiwan has created a dilemma in cultural identity for its people.

Politico-cultural Context

Before its cession to Japan in 1895 as a result of the Ch'ing government's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War
(1894), Taiwan had been formally incorporated by China in 1683. Even prior to the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911), Han Chinese had increasingly become the major inhabitants on the island. In 1661, the Ming loyalist Cheng Ch' en-kung (1624-1662) 蔣成功, first ousted the Dutch from Taiwan and then established it as a base for a possible attempt at recovering the mainland.

Cheng's dream never came true, but he and his sons had laid the institutional, social, and cultural foundations of Chinese civilization in Taiwan by the time of their defeat by the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1683. On the eve of the Japanese occupation, Taiwan had an agricultural economy, very similar to that in Fukien or Kwangtung. A landlord-gentry class provided local social and political leadership whether or not the Ch'ing government sent competent officials.

People in Taiwan did not submit to Japanese rule without resistance. The last military effort, the so-called Hsi-lai An 西來庵 Incident, was made in 1915. The ruthless crackdown by the Japanese troops led to more than nine hundred deaths. After that incident, armed protests transformed into socio-political and eventually literary movements.
After World War I, the principle of national self-determination promoted by American President Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) fired the imaginations of many. Some Taiwanese students then studying in Tokyo were stimulated by the principle and decided to campaign for Taiwan's liberation from Japanese rule. They realized that without a reformed and enlightened society, people in Taiwan would never be able to feel the need for liberation. Again, inspired by the new culture movement (starting around 1917) in mainland China, they reached the agreement that a similar new culture movement in Taiwan is also inevitable.

In order to appeal to the masses, the first task of this cultural enlightenment movement was language reform. As in China prior to its new culture movement, classical Chinese was the language used in writing by the privileged scholar-gentry class in Taiwan before the 1920s. Language reform in Taiwan was nevertheless confronted by more complex problems. Since the beginning of the Occupation Period, Japanese policy was to develop a dual society, then gradually introduce Japanese language and customs until integration could be achieved in the distant future. Under their educational system, Japanese language was naturally the medium of
instruction at school. For those Taiwanese who were educated during the Occupation Period, Japanese, instead of classical Chinese, was the language of which they had better command. But many Taiwanese intellectuals opposed the use of Japanese language for patriotic reasons. Vernacular Chinese, in their opinion, was the ideal medium of communication, for it was not only relatively easier but a symbol of cultural ties with the mother country. Thus, a number of Taiwanese intellectuals began to advocate the use of vernacular Chinese in writing. Among the more important of these were, Huang Ch'eng-ts'ung, Huang Ch'ao-ch'in, and Chang Wo-chun.

In 1922, Huang Ch'eng-ts'ung and Huang Ch'ao-ch'in respectively published their articles in T'ai-wan (the organ of Taiwan Cultural Association, responsible for promoting the cultural enlightenment movement). Huang Ch'eng-ts'ung in his article entitled "Lun p'u-chi pai-hua-wen te hsin shih-ming" pointed out that the adoption of vernacular Chinese could facilitate common people not only to read and to write but to acquire their knowledge of world affairs. Therefore, he further declared that the popularization
of the vernacular would lead to a more progressive society. Huang Ch’ao-ch’in's article, "Han-wen kai-ko lun" 漢文改革論 (On the Reform of Written Chinese) encouraged people in Taiwan to abandon classical Chinese and Japanese in writing. The author suggested that vernacular Chinese be used whether writing a letter or giving a lecture.13

When the two Huangs advocated the use of vernacular Chinese in writing, they simply saw it from the viewpoint of improving the means of diffusing knowledge and did not touch upon the subject of literary reform.

New Literature Movement in Taiwan

As we know, the language reform in China was only a part of the larger literary revolution of 1917. Hsi Shih's (1891-1962) 胡適 "Wen-hsueh kai-liang ch'u-i" 文學改良芻議 (Some Tentative Suggestions for Literary Reform) and Ch’en Tu-hsiu's (1879-1942) 陳獨秀 "Wen-hsueh ke-ming lun" 文學革命論 (On Literary Revolution) both contended that what needed to be reformed in Chinese literature was not merely literary form but literary content as well.14
The first person who attacked the affected sentimentality and feudalistic mentality of traditional literature in Taiwan was Chang Wo-chun (1902-1955), a Taiwanese student then studying in Peking. Having experienced the literary revolution in China and felt its inevitability, Chang urged a similar reform to take place in Taiwan. In 1924, he consecutively wrote two articles, "Chih T'ai-wan ch'ing-nien te i-feng hsin" 致台灣青年的一封信 (A Letter to Taiwan Youth) and "Tsao-kao te T'ai-wan wen-hsueh-chieh" 糟糕的台灣文學界 (The Terrible Taiwan Literary Circles) in T'ai-wan min pao 台灣民報. Chang Wo-chun, in these two articles, reminded the literati in Taiwan that Taiwan literature would become an outcast of world literary circles if they continued to be obsessed with the time-honored classicism and failed to keep up with the revolutionary changes in the literary circles of China and Japan.15

Prior to 1924, Taiwan literary circles were dominated by old-style literati. The old-style poetry was the major literary genre written and appreciated by the literati. In Chang's opinion, there were far too many so-called "poets" who hardly produced any innovative and worthwhile poetic works. Like its counterpart in China, Chang's criticism was harshly
rebutted by conservative literati and warmly welcomed by progressive intellectuals. Lien Heng 連橫 , the leading old-style poet in Taiwan, sarcastically condemned the supporters of new literature for their ignorance of old classics and superficial knowledge of Western literature.16

The battle between proponents of old literature and new literature thus began. In order to further his argument, Chang Wo-chun wrote another article entitled "Ch'ing ho-li ch'ai-hsia che tso pai ts'ao ts'ung chung te p'o-chiu tien-t'ang" 講合力拆下這座破敗茅中的 (Please Join the Effort to Dismantle the Ruined Temple in the Thicket of Shriveled Weeds). In this article, he pointed out that the temple of old literature in China had been shattered into pieces by the powerful storm of literary revolution and Taiwan had no reason to contradict the natural course of Chinese literature.17 Other supporters of both old literature and new literature also engaged in the battle. After a series of debates, the fight gradually quieted down and Taiwan new literature movement was finally underway.
The Controversy over Writing in the Min Dialect

At the very beginning of Taiwan's new literature movement, what language should be adopted in writing the new literature aroused much controversy. Some intellectuals sensed the importance of the Taiwanese dialect and determined to preserve it. Lien Wen-ch'ing, for instance, wrote two articles in 1924 to express his fear for the possible disappearance of the Min dialect under the long-term colonial language policy. In the article entitled "Yen-yu chih she-hui hsing-chih" (The Social Nature of Language), Lien pointed out that the social nature of language is to exclude the predominance of other peoples' languages on the one hand and to protect our own people's language on the other. He continued to pursue the language crisis in Taiwan in his second article, "Chiang-lai chih T'ai-wan yu" (The Taiwanese Dialect in the Future). According to him, the colonial language policy was simply to use the ruling country's national language to erode that of the ruled. Thus, he stressed the necessity of preserving the Taiwanese dialect. For some reason, Lien stopped writing midway through a projected serial. His more detailed
ideas remained unknown.18

Chang Wo-chun, the helmsman of the Taiwan new literature movement nevertheless held a quite different view. Based on his belief that Taiwan culture was part of Chinese culture, he therefore insisted that the Taiwanese dialect should be kept in line with China's national language, i.e., pai-hua 白話 (vernacular Chinese). In 1925, Chang put forward a slogan of "the establishment of vernacular literature and the reconstruction of the Taiwanese dialect" echoing Hu Shih's promotion of "a national language suitable for literature and a literature in the national language".19 It is necessary, to Chang's mind, to change the Taiwanese dialect into a more "reasonable language" since about ninety per cent of the colloquial Taiwanese at that time was without corresponding written characters. He thus asserted that only through the unification of the colloquial Taiwanese and the written Taiwanese could the Taiwanese dialect stay close to vernacular Chinese and Taiwan culture remain connected with Chinese culture.

Considering the fact that the majority of the population in Taiwan were either illiterate or barely educated during the 1920s, Chang's ideal of adopting
vernacular Chinese as the means of communication in Taiwan was not very practical. Vernacular Chinese to the masses in Taiwan was not vernacular but as different a language almost as classical Chinese. The adoption of vernacular Chinese in writing new literature has also proved difficult for Taiwanese writers. After some years of experimentation, many Taiwanese writers still experience some interference from the Taiwanese dialect while writing the standard vernacular. In view of the importance of preserving the Taiwanese dialect as well as the difficulty in promoting vernacular Chinese, some intellectuals turned to the alternative of creating a Taiwanese vernacular writing. To these intellectuals, writing in Taiwanese vernacular was the way to expand the social foundation of the Taiwan new literature movement.

It was against this kind of background that Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature was advocated. The important requisite for "hsiang-t'u" literature was to write in the Taiwanese dialect. As was mentioned at the outset of this chapter, Cheng K'un-wu was the first person who referred to the term "hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh" in 1930. Cheng, although stressing on Taiwanese vernacular writing, failed to present any sound arguments for
promoting "hsiang-t'u" literature at that particular time. His idea thus received little response.

The Emergence of the Term "Hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh"

It was not until later in the same year when Huang Shih-hui published his article, "Tsen-yang pu t'i-ch'ang hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh?" (How Can One Not Advocate "Hsiang-t'u" Literature?), did the advocacy of "hsiang-t'u" literature attract more attention. Huang contended:

You are a Taiwanese. Above your head is the Taiwanese sky; under your feet is the Taiwanese soil. What you see is the Taiwanese environment; what you hear is news about Taiwan; what you have undergone is experiences in Taiwan; what you speak is the Taiwanese dialect, therefore, with your mighty pen and marvelous writing skill, you should write literature about Taiwan.22

Based on the above argument, Huang further asserted that Taiwanese writers should "use the Taiwanese dialect to compose essays, poetry, fiction, folk songs, and describe things and events in Taiwan".23 The reason for him to hold this standpoint was simply because that vernacular Chinese as well as classical Chinese was an aristocratic language accessible only to the highly
educated few. It seemed to Huang that the most natural and accessible language for the masses was the Taiwanese dialect.

According to what Huang Shih-hui expounded in the above quotation, "hsiang-t' u wen-hsueh" can be defined as "homeland literature" or "native literature", a literature about the native land and in the native language. The movement of "hsiang-t' u" literature should be regarded as part of the cultural program of bringing the Taiwanese dialect into literary writing from the very beginning. What we can also draw from Huang's argument is that the writing technique used in "hsiang-t' u" literature should be realistic in nature since the content of this literature is things and events in Taiwan.

As a matter of fact, the two important advocates of "hsiang-t' u" literature, Huang Shih-hui and Kuo Ch'iu-sheng, have respectively expressed some reluctance in proposing Taiwanese vernacular writing. Huang pointed out the fact that "People in Taiwan are unable to use the Chinese language for political reasons and unwilling to use the Japanese language for nationalistic reasons. In order to accommodate to the practical social conditions of Taiwan and establish
a unique culture of its own, to promote 'hsiang-t'u' literature becomes unavoidable." Kuo confessed that he loved vernacular Chinese very much and yet the time and circumstances did not allow him to use it complacently. In other words, the advocacy of "hsiang-t'u" literature for them was only an expedient measure taken under the Japanese colonial rule.24

Nevertheless, there was another factor worth noticing. In the late 1920s, after the split in the Cultural Association (the organization undertaking the task of promoting cultural enlightenment movement) over the support of the farmer's movement, there was a sharp turn to the left in the socio-political movements in Taiwan.25 In 1928, there was even an organization of Taiwanese Communists.26 As a result, to realize a mass culture became the major concern of many intellectuals. In a number of essays concerning "hsiang-t'u" literature and the Taiwanese vernacular writing, we find great eagerness on the part of intellectuals to reach out to the masses. The promotion of "hsiang-t'u" literature in the beginning years of 1930s thus may also be seen as the effort to bridge the gap between intellectuals and the general population.
"Wen-i ta-chung-hua" 文藝大眾化 (Literature for the Masses) seemed to be the mutual concern of the leftist writers in China and the majority of writers in Taiwan in the late Twenties through early Thirties. Yu Ta-fu 鄭遠夫, in 1928, first referred to the term "Ta-chung wen-i" 大眾文藝 (Mass Literature) and conveyed his idea of "making literature the possession of the masses". In the early Thirties, leftist writers in China initiated the movement of "literature for the masses" while the similar proposal was also passed by the organization called "T'ai-wan wen-i lien-meng" 台灣文藝聯盟 (The League of Taiwan Literary Writers) in 1934. Like their counterparts on the Chinese mainland, some Taiwanese writers also wanted to utilize literature as a means of mobilizing and enlightening the exploited masses.

The Opposite Opinions

Not all the intellectuals in Taiwan at that time agreed with Huang Shih-hui and Kuo Ch'iu-sheng on the subject of "hsiang-t'u" literature. Several writers revealed their different views immediately after Huang and Kuo's ideas had been made public. The opposite
opinions can be generally classified into two kinds. Lin K'o-fu's "Hsiang-t' u wen-hsueh te chien-t' ao" (An Examination of 'Hsiang-t' u' literature) can serve as an example of the first kind. Lin argued:

Why must Taiwan go to all this trouble producing a literature which is exclusively understandable to Taiwanese? If we could all learn vernacular Chinese and use it so the people in China could also understand, wouldn't it be better? Since Taiwan and China have a close relationship directly and indirectly, I hope every Taiwanese can study written Chinese as well as spoken Chinese and use vernacular Chinese to write literature.29

Lin's consideration was not based upon the particular colonial status of Taiwan, but upon the inseparable cultural relations between Taiwan and China.

Another kind of disagreement was voiced by Yu Wen's article, "Hsiang-t' u wen-hsueh te yin-wei" (A Meditation on 'Hsiang-t' u' Literature). Yu pointed out that "hsiang-t' u" literature was a kind of pastoral literature promoted by Germans in the nineteenth century. Since it was an outmoded product and lacked universality, he continued to maintain that advocating "hsiang-t' u" literature would stand in the way of cultural communication with mainland China.30
The controversial issues of writing in Taiwanese dialect and "hsiang-t'u" literature had been debated for more than two years since 1930 and was made silent when Chinese publications were put under a ban by the colonial government in 1937.

The Split of Consciousness

Although the debate about "hsiang-t'u" literature during the Occupation Period died down because of the impending global war, the seeds of divided consciousness among Taiwanese intellectuals were thus burgeoning since then. Those who stood up for Taiwanese vernacular writing and the particularity of Taiwan literature tended more to stress "Taiwanese consciousness", just as their opponents who favored adopting vernacular Chinese and who saw Taiwan literature as a branch of Chinese literature tended more to stress "Chinese consciousness". The differences between these two kinds of consciousness among Taiwanese intellectuals not only became a much debated political issue after the National government's retreat to Taiwan in 1949, but played an important role in the later division of "hsiang-t'u" advocates in the 1980s.
As a political issue, the extreme emphasis on "Taiwanese consciousness" leads to sentiments for an independent Taiwan, while the cherishing of "Chinese consciousness" is tied to aspirations for a unified China. As a literary issue, people with strong "Taiwanese consciousness" claim that Taiwan literature has developed its autonomous characteristic since the colonial period and should not be considered a branch of Chinese literature any longer, while those with strong "Chinese consciousness" maintain that the cultural tie between Taiwan and China is historically unseverable and thus Taiwan literature always constitutes part of Chinese literature. The conflicts between "Taiwanese consciousness" and "Chinese consciousness" have loomed large and acquired a new historical significance in Taiwan today after four decades of separation from China since 1949. "Taiwanese consciousness" and "Chinese consciousness" have been replaced by the more popular terms of "Taiwan complex" and "China complex" respectively. Again, like their predecessors in the Occupation Period, intellectuals in Taiwan today are facing the dilemma of cultural identity resulting from the division of politico-social-economic systems on the two sides of the Taiwan Straits.
Taiwan's New Literature in Retrospect

Generally speaking, the new literature movement in Taiwan during the Japanese Occupation Period started as part of the new culture movement in 1920, the publication of the inaugural issue of T'ai-wan ch'ing-nien (Taiwan Youth) (a journal primarily dealing with socio-political-economic issues), and came to an end in 1945, the date of Taiwan's post World War II retrocession to China. The duration of the movement spanned as long as a quarter century. In terms of its development, Taiwan new literature movement can be roughly divided into three stages: (1) 1920-1925: cradle period; (2) 1926-1937: period of maturity; and (3) 1937-1945: war period.31

The first two stages of its development paralleled very much with the time period when colonial rule was relatively liberal and the writers enjoyed more freedom in dealing with socio-political subject matters. The movement reached its climax on the eve of the war. During the war, harsh political control was renewed. The Japanese implemented a forced assimilation policy, kominka, 皇帝化 meaning "to make into the emperor's people", or simply "Japanize".32 Under this policy, the Chinese language was prohibited. Taiwanese
writers were only allowed to publish their works in Japanese. Some of them thus chose to leave for mainland China while others turned to the portrayal of the psychology of the individual to avoid sensitive socio-political issues.³³

In practice, except a few pieces by Chang Wo-chun such as "Mai ts'ai-p'iao" 購彩票 (Purchasing Lottery Tickets) and "Pai-t'ai-t'ai ai-shih" 白太太大史 (The Sad History of Mrs. Pai) which took Peking as background setting, almost all the fiction writing from the Occupation Period dealt with realities in Taiwan.³⁴ Insofar as the content is concerned, therefore, they are qualified to be called "hsiang-t'u" literature. "Taiwan new literature produced in the Occupation Period" as Yeh Shih-t'ao said, "was virtually an equivalent of 'hsiang-t'u' literature."³⁵ As for Taiwanese vernacular writing, the lack of standard version of characters for dialectal expressions created much confusion and difficulty for readers of Taiwan new literature in later times even if they were well versed in Taiwanese dialect. Yeh pointed out that many places in the story "Tuan-shui chih hou" 斷水之後 (After the Stoppage of Water Supply) by Yang Shou-yu 楊守愚 (1905-1959) has become obscured because of the overuse
of dialectal expressions.\textsuperscript{36}

The ironical but undeniable fact is that, under the assimilation policy enforced by the colonial government, some Taiwan literary writers had a better command of Japanese than of Chinese. Many literary journals published during the Occupation Period carried works in both Chinese and Japanese. Since 1933, the establishment of literary journal \textit{Fu-erh-mo-sha} (Formosa) (a publication exclusively in Japanese), a number of Taiwanese fiction writers who wrote in Japanese began to emerge on the literary scene. Their works often demonstrated a variety of writing skills absorbed from Western modern fiction.\textsuperscript{37} Among them, Yang K'uei's \textit{Sung-pao-fu} (The Newsboy); Lu He-jo's \textit{Niu-che} (Oxcart); and Lung Ying-tsung's \textit{Chih yu mu-kua te hsiao-chen} (The Small Town with Papaya Trees) were well recognized by Japan and published in such Japanese literary journals as \textit{Bungaku hyoron} (Literary Review) and \textit{Kaizo} (Reconstruction).\textsuperscript{38}

Taiwanese writers' good command of Japanese resulted in their maladjustment to the new situation after Taiwan's retrocession to China. In the new era, they had
to face a challenge, that is, to write in fluent Chinese. Few of them managed to survive as literary writers. Even if they survived, they were no longer as successful as they had been. This also created a fault in the continuity of the development of Taiwan new literature in the postwar period.

As Japanese colonial rule came to an end in 1945, the socio-political climate in Taiwan went through a drastic change. This tremendous change also ushered in a new stage of Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature.
Notes to Chapter One


2. Ibid.

3. Yeh, Shih-t'ao. T'ai-wan hsiang-t'u tso-chia lun chi (A Collection of Essays on Taiwan 'Hsiang-t'u' Writers), (Taipei: Yuan-ching, 1979), pp. 4-5.


5. See Ch'en Ying-chen's "Chien-li min-tsu wen-hsueh te feng-ko" (Establish the Style of National Literature) in Ku-erh te li-shih; li-shih te ku-erh (The History of an Orphan; An Orphan of the History), (Taipei: Yuan-ching Publisher, 1984), pp. 25-32.


8. Ibid., p. 30.


12. Yeh, Shih-t'ao. T'ai-wan wen-hsueh shih kang, p. 25.

13. Ibid., p. 22.

15. Ch'en, Shao-t'ing (comp.). *T'ai-wan hsin-wen-hsueh yun-tung chien shih*, pp. 21-23.

16. Ibid., p. 23.

17. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

18. Ibid., pp. 61-62.


20. Ibid., p. 25.


22. Ibid., p. 66.


28. Ch'en Shao-t'ing (comp.). *T'ai-wan hsin-wen-hsueh yun-tung chien shih*, p. 110. The promotion of "literature for the masses" may be seen as an aftershock of an international phenomenon. Similar movement could also be found in the Soviet Union and France earlier. See J. E. Flower's *Literature and the Left in France* (New York: Methuen, 1983), pp. 98-99.

29. Ibid., p. 73.

30. Yeh, Shih-t'ao. *T'ai-wan wen-hsueh shih kang*, p. 27.

31. Ibid., p. 28-29.
32. Gold, Thomas B. *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle*, p. 44.


34. Yeh, Shih-t'ao. *T'ai-wan wen-hsueh shih kang*, p. 42.

35. Ibid., p. 143.

36. Ibid., p. 43.

37. Ibid., p. 58.

38. Ibid., p. 52, 64.
CHAPTER II

Taiwan Literature in the Changing Phases of Society: from 1945 through 1970s

It is perhaps difficult to judge the universal validity of Fredric Jameson's claim that "everything is 'in the last analysis' political." But the claim certainly holds true in the case of the development of Taiwan literature from the mid-forties through the seventies. The relationship between literature and politics may sometimes appear obscure, yet it is always by and large traceable.

Socio-political Context after the Retrocession

The formal retrocession to China in 1945 was expected by the people of Taiwan to be the end of their tragedy. Unfortunately, they soon found themselves in a situation not much better off, if not worse off, than the previous colonial rule under the Japanese. Despite their high hopes, many policies implemented by the
National government (headed by Chiang Kai-shek) on the island disappointed them to a great extent.

In 1946, the National government on the mainland was engaging in the civil war against the Communists. In order to meet the needs of the central government, Taiwan's economy was soon brought down to a very low level. Tons of rice, sugar, and raw materials were shipped to the mainland while the majority of the islanders were suffering from food shortages. Political repression was yet another factor which aroused great discontentment. The administrative personnel sent by the National government treated the Taiwanese less as full citizens of the Republic of China, more as a colonized people. The severe blow came when Governor-General Ch'en Yi announced in 1947 that China's new constitution would not go into effect on Taiwan at the same time as on the mainland. The reason he gave was that the Taiwanese were politically retarded and were not capable of carrying on self-government in an intelligent manner.

In addition to economic and political pressure, Taiwan society was then seriously plagued by inflation, corruption, unemployment and epidemics. The overall
discontentment soon reached the point of eruption. Thus, it was not surprising that the "2-28 Incident" occurred just two years after the retrocession.

The conflict between the Ch'en Yi government and the Taiwanese people gradually led to a tension between all the mainlanders on the island and the local natives. On the evening of February 27, 1947, an angry crowd gathered in Taipei after Monopoly Bureau agents struck a woman who was accused of handling untaxed cigarettes. On the next day (February 28), the crowd grew larger and took to the streets. All the mainlanders on the island became a target of their anger. The riot spread in the following days. When Taiwanese took over the administration in a number of localities, the government acceded to a number of political reforms and promised not to call for more troops from the mainland.

The promise was not kept. In March, more troops was sent from the mainland and the revengeful action was taken. The Taiwanese intellectual and social elite considered critical of the government fell prey to numerous arrests and executions. Accurate figures for the loss of life may never be available. According to George H. Kerr, who witnessed the incident, the number may reach 20,000.
After the incident, the Nationalists and other mainlanders felt betrayed by the Taiwanese people. For many Taiwanese, especially those who lost a family member or a friend in the affair, the incident was an unforgettable nightmare. It had a profound impact on Taiwan society. Socially, the hostility between mainlanders and the natives deepened, although it was often suppressed. Politically, the majority of the masses in Taiwan learned a lesson from the tragic incident and became quiescent and apolitical while others actively sought independence for Taiwan. The hard-liners of "Independent Taiwan" movement struggled for the autonomy of Taiwan and rejected the idea that Taiwan should be governed by the mainland regime, whether it be the Nationalists or the Communists.

Parallel to the socio-political unrest, there were also signs of disagreement between native writers and mainland writers in Taiwan literary circles. Taiwanese writers, such as Yang K'uei or Lin Shu-kuang, tended to stress the historical and regional "particularity" of Taiwan literature. They hoped to reestablish Taiwan literature based on this "particularity". Mainland writers, such as Shih hsi-mei or Ch'en Ta-yu, tended to view
Taiwan literature as a kind of "frontier literature", tainted by Japanese literature. They maintained that Taiwan literature could only be incorporated in Chinese literature through the process of eliminating its "regionalism". The debate ended without reaching any conciliatory conclusion. Their different views on "regionalism" become a recurrent motif of some of the later literary debates. One of the themes in the controversy over "hsiang-t'u" literature in the 70s was also regionalism versus nationalism.

In the latter half of the forties, since most Taiwanese writers were unable to write in Chinese, their works were published by way of translation. Works of fiction produced in this period basically dwelled on the social reality after the retrocession. Rebellions and resentful sentiment was often revealed between the lines. For political reasons, some of these writers were put in prison or sent into exile while others chose to keep silent.

National Government's Retreat to Taiwan

As a result of its defeat in the civil war, the National government retreated to Taiwan in December,
1949. In a brief period of time nearly two million civilian and military refugees fled to the island.\textsuperscript{12} Taiwan's economy was then affected by the civil war on the mainland. Inflation was out of control as prices rose 1,145 percent in 1948.\textsuperscript{13} The sudden arrival of these mainland Chinese only turned the situation from bad to worse.

In addition to economic disarray, there were also social problems confronting the government. Traditionally, mainland Chinese considered Taiwan a cultural backwater. After the "2-28 Incident", the people of Taiwan were known to be hostile to the mainlanders.\textsuperscript{14} On the part of the Taiwanese, they had already lost faith in Chiang Kai-shek's regime when the Nationalist government broke a pledge and sent troops to suppress them during the 2-28 incident. They were not concerned about the future fortunes of Chiang's regime. The unpredictable hand of fate, however, offered the National government and the people of Taiwan a second chance to work out their relationship.\textsuperscript{15} As for how to reach that goal, no one was certain.

Before the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the prospect of the refuge government on Taiwan was almost hopeless. Internal instability plus the external Communist threat constantly challenged the regime.
Immediately after the Korean War, Taiwan became strategically important in the global anti-Communist atmosphere. American President Harry Truman sent the Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Straits to help the Taiwan government resist Communist invasion. Economic and military aid soon followed. In 1954, Mutual Defense Treaty was signed between the American government and the Taiwan government. The treaty not only guaranteed Taiwan's external safety but helped its internal stability. Since then, Taiwan society moved gradually toward economic rehabilitation and industrialization. Simultaneously, American influences began to loom large on many aspects of Taiwan society.

After they had come to Taiwan, the Nationalist Party (or the Kuomintang) superimposed their former national-level party and government structures on the province of Taiwan. By suspending general elections until the recovery of the mainland, the KMT maintained its dominance in governmental organs. Despite the fact that the natives constitute more than 80% of the population in Taiwan, important government posts were occupied mostly by the mainlanders. In other words, political stability was achieved at the expense of democracy.
Liberalism vs. Nationalism

Generally speaking, the fifties in Taiwan witnessed the revival of some intellectual legacies of the May Fourth period. The May Fourth Movement originally started as a student protest against the Chinese government's humiliating policy toward Japan on May 4, 1919. It touched off a subsequent intellectual revolution, including the "new thought tide", the literary revolution. The May Fourth period marked the beginning of modern China's cultural transformation of which modern Chinese literature was a part. The Nationalists did not want to see the legacy of the May Fourth Movement continued in Taiwan partly because the Movement had a close affinity to the birth of the Chinese Communist Party. The official attitude of the Nationalist Party toward the May Fourth Movement was rather traditionalistic. The party leader Chiang Kai-shek severely criticized the intellectual reformers of the May Fourth period for their iconoclastic teachings. The conservative wing under Chiang strived to promote a traditionist policy. "The worship of Confucius and the reading of classics" were very much emphasized. However, the traditionalist policy later
proved unable to withstand the trend of westernization in this capitalist society.

In intellectual circles, a liberal trend headed by Hu Shih began to revive. Hu Shih, John Dewey's disciple, was the most eminent survivor of the May Fourth period on the island. Hu repeated his earlier criticism on the unreasonable aspects of traditional Chinese culture. In 1949, Hu and other liberal thinkers founded a magazine called Tzu-yu Chung-kuo (Free China) to advocate individualism, freedom of speech, and Western democracy. Throughout the fifties, the magazine served as an outlet for liberal opinions voiced from Taiwan and Hong Kong. The editor of the magazine, Lei Chen, and several associates proposed the creation of an opposition party hoping to bring about a political reform. This little democratic sprout was finally crushed when Lei was put under arrest and condemned to imprisonment in 1960.22

Hu Shih and other liberals' stress of the spiritual supremacy of Western civilization did unnerve some nationalists who held firmly to their faith in the strength of Chinese culture. Regarding nationalism, Hu's attitude was manifested in the following statement: "Those who promote nationalism must be conservative
people; political parties which promote nationalism must be conservative parties."^23

The antagonism between liberalism and nationalism neither started nor ended in the fifties. Their conflict can be traced back to some thirty years to the so-called May Fourth period. During that period, nationalists tended to ascribe Chinese humiliations since the Opium War (1839-1842) to foreign imperialist aggression. Liberals did not share the passions with nationalists but rather emphasized the importance of modernization or individual critical enlightenment for national salvation. In the eyes of many nationalists, Hu Shih and his followers were merely apologists for imperialism. To Hu Shih, nationalism was too often a patriotism founded on prejudice.\(^24\) Three decades after these initial arguments were raised, they were still carried on, only the battleground had been shifted from the mainland to Taiwan.

As Taiwan society was in the process of westernization since the fifties, the ideological conflicts between liberals and nationalists were also sharpened and intensified. The issue of their debate in the sixties was on the controversy over Eastern and Western civilizations while their focus of attention was switched to "hsiang-t’u" literature in the seventies.
Taiwan Literature in the Fifties

Taiwan literature in the fifties was cut off from both the literary legacy of the May Fourth period as well as that of the new literature movement in the Occupation period. Strict censorship on publication prevented the reading public from access to literary works of the thirties when Chinese new literature was in full bloom. Most literary writers from the thirties were either leftists or sympathizers of the Communist movement. Their works were put under a ban in an anti-Communist environment. Taiwan's new literature movement in the Occupation period was first obstructed by the war and then by the writers' inability to master the Chinese language. Political suppression was yet another factor which made some native writers stop pursuing their writing careers. Like their counterparts on the mainland in the thirties, many Taiwanese writers from the Occupation period played the role of social critics and more or less cherished some socialist ideals. The ironhanded purge of Communists by the government in the beginning of the fifties silenced some significant voices among this group of writers.\textsuperscript{25}
Wen-hsueh tsa-chih 文學雜誌 (Literary Review, 1956-1960), Wen-hsing tsa-chih (Literary Star Journal, 1957-1965) and Hsien-tai shih 現代詩 (Modern Poetry, 1953- ) were three major literary journals during the fifties. The founder of Wen-hsueh tsa-chih was Hsia Tsi-an 夏濟安, a professor of Western Literature at National Taiwan University. The magazine called for "realism as the canon for fiction writing." Realism, however, was not what younger writers at that time were interested in pursuing. The socio-political reality of the time was not something that they could afford to touch upon. In order to avoid possible government censorship, the young writers had to resort to "the art of innuendo in numerous forms of 'modernism' to express their claustrophobic fears, their sense of insecurity ..." Therefore, despite the canon it upheld, Wen-hsueh tsa-chih ironically nurtured a younger generation of modernist writers.

Wen-hsing tsa-chih was, like Tzu-yu Chung-kuo, characterized by its liberal thinking. Unlike Wen-hsueh tsa-chih, Wen-hsing tsa-chih appealed to a wider range of readers whose interests were not confined to literature. In its literary aspect, Wen-hsing tsa-chih first attempted to reshape Chinese literature by way of
introducing and disseminating Western literary techniques and then advocated the idea of "total westernization".

Hsien-tai shih was a poetic journal founded by modernist poet Chi Hsuan 紀弦 in 1953. This journal aimed at promulgating the "spirit" and "basic elements of all new schools of Western poetry since Baudelaire." It had the conviction that writing modern Chinese poetry meant "horizontal transplantation" rather than "vertical inheritance". In other words, to this group of modernist poets, "total westernization" was a necessity in the field of writing modern Chinese poetry. Thus, Wen-hsing tsa-chih and Hsien-tai shih laid the foundation for the sweeping modernist literary trend in the sixties.

As far as creative writing is concerned, the fifties was not a fruitful period. Under the government policy, most literary works produced in this period were anti-Communist in nature. With only few exceptions, such as Chiang Kuei's 蔣基于《旋風》(The Whirlwind), Chang Ai-ling's 張愛玲, also known as Eileen Chang, 鄭愛玲, Yang-ko 琮歌 (The Rice-sprout Song), this whole body of anti-Communist writings was not of high literary value. Apart from anti-Communist
literature, there were works reflecting mainland writers' nostalgic sentiments and escapist psychology. Ssu-ma Chung-yuan 司馬中原 and Chu Hsi-ning 朱西寧 were representative writers of this nostalgic literature. Memories of the mainland in the bygone days were the main source of their creative writings. Unrealistic romance which fulfills people's fantasies was the major trend of popular literature. Ch'iuung Yao 蕭瑤 was the most representative figure in this category of writers.

The Taiwan literary scene in the fifties was dominated by mainlander writers. Chung Li-ho 鍾理和, Chung Chao-cheng 鍾肇成, and a few other native writers only played a minor role in the literary contribution of that time. Although they were later referred to as the first generation of postwar "hsiang-t'u" writers, their works were not fully appreciated until the seventies when "hsiang-t'u" literature regained its favor.

Economic and Social Transformation in the Sixties

By the mid-1950s, Taiwan's economy had gradually embarked on a path of sustained, rapid development.
In order to stimulate industrialization, the government adopted a strategy of combining exports with direct foreign investment in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{35} The policy proved so successful that it made the decade of the 1960s one of great economic progress, with an average annual GNP growth rate of 9.9% but with only 2% inflation.\textsuperscript{36} As a result of this economic improvement, U.S. aid was finally phased out in 1965.\textsuperscript{37} Many economic indicators in the sixties revealed that agriculture's role became less significant while industry's role became more and more significant. For instance, agriculture's contribution to Net Domestic Product continued to decline as industry's continued to rise. Everything pointed to the fact that Taiwan's economy was transforming from an agricultural orientation to an industrial one.

Taiwan society also went through rapid change as the economy industrialized. In the booming atmosphere, everyone seemed to have a chance to start his own enterprise. Some workers used their jobs to accumulate enough capital to run their own business. Great social mobility and the high turnover among female workers made the formation of working-class consciousness almost impossible, not to mention a militant labor movement
(strikes were prohibited under the martial law). Rapid industrialization in the sixties attracted a large rural population away from the farms. Young peasant girls constituted a major source of the industrial work force. Non agricultural sources of income gradually became responsible for the increase in real incomes of farming households.

Another noticeable phenomenon in the sixties was that a middle class composed of professionals and service personnel began to take shape. This class of people were characterized by their eagerness to join the system and their fear of losing the material gains they were making. They were basically afraid of social or political instability. As Taiwan's economy took off, the tension between Taiwanese and mainlanders relaxed as well. Class, instead of regional origin, became the main cleavage in society.

Modernism as a Prevailing Literary Trend

The establishment of a literary journal entitled Hsien-tai wen-hsueh (Modern Literature, 1960-73) in 1960 marked a new era in the Taiwan literary
scene. This journal was founded by a group of college students who were then studying in the Department of Western Literature at National Taiwan University. Many of its founders later became well-known writers, such as Pai Hsien-yung 白先勇, Wang Wen-hsing 王文興, Ch'en Jo-hsi 陳若曦. More importantly, Hsien-tai wen-hsueh, following Hsien-tai shih, introduced Western modernism to the literary world in Taiwan. The main contribution of Hsien-tai shih was confined to the genre of poetry while Hsien-tai wen-hsueh extended the field to fiction writing.

As its manifesto pointed out, the mission of Hsien-tai wen-hsueh was "trying, seeking, and creating new artistic forms and styles" and undertaking a task of "constructive destruction" vis-a-vis Chinese tradition. Franz Kafka was featured in the inaugural issue of Hsien-tai wen-hsueh. Reviews of other Western authors, such as Thomas Mann, James Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence, were highlighted in subsequent issues. The magazine was also dedicated to introducing Western fictional concepts and techniques, such as symbolism, surrealism, Freudian psychology, existentialism.
Although the kind of Western modernism presented in *Hsien-tai wen-hsueh* might appear superficial and out of context to some critics, the journal did nurture a number of younger writers, mainlanders as well as native Taiwanese. In addition to the above-mentioned founders of the magazine, the second generation of "hsiang-t'u" writers, such as Hwang Chun-ming (also known as Huang Ch'un-ming), Ch'en Ying-chen, Wang Chen-ho, were also contributors of *Hsien-tai wen-hsueh*. The earlier works of these "hsiang-t'u" writers more or less fell under the influence of Western modernism.

With the promotion of *Hsien-tai wen-hsueh* and *Hsien-tai shih*, Western modernism became the popular literary trend in the sixties. Modernist poetry and fiction flourished and superseded other literary genres. Modernist poets dwelled mainly on the originality and radicalness of the language rather than the significance of the content. Their language became increasingly obscure and uncomprehensible. The works they produced were alienated from social reality and the majority of the reading public. Compared to poetry, fiction writing seemed to be a more fruitful area insofar as experimenting Western modernism was concerned. Inspired by Western fictional technique,
fiction writers in Taiwan were more capable of exploring new dimensions of their subject matters. Wang Wen-hsing's controversial piece "Chia pien" (A Crisis in the Family) would serve as a good example. The theme of this work daringly challenged Confucian ethics while its language purposely violated the conventional rule of the Chinese language to convey the author's intended message.

There were reasons that contributed to the popularity of Western modernism among young intellectuals in Taiwan of the sixties. Political apathy and the sense of rootlessness were probably the two most noticeable ones. Political apathy was induced by the authoritarian style of the government and reinforced by the pervasive middle-class mentality which basically guarded against political dissension. Under those circumstances, youths chose to "go inward," i.e., to dwell in the personal world of sensory, subconscious and dream experience. The sense of historical discontinuity was shared by the younger generation of both mainlanders and native Taiwanese. Younger emigres felt rootless and alienated on the island while younger natives were not interested in their ties with the soil. It was not until the seventies that the search for roots
became popular among younger native intellectuals.  

The popularity of modernist literature in Taiwan was nevertheless an elitist phenomenon. Its influence never reached the minds of the masses outside academia. Apart from Western modernism, there were literary journals, such as T'ai-wan wen-i 台灣文藝 (Taiwan Literature, 1964–), Li 竹 (Bamboo Hat Bimonthly, 1964–), which tended to stress local color and realism in literature. Another literary journal called Wen-hsueh chi-k'an 文學季刊 (Literature Quarterly, 1966–1972, later resumed publication under a new abbreviated title Wen-chi 文季 in 1983) was founded by Yu T'ien-ts'ung, Ch'en Ying-chen, Huang Ch'un-ming, among others. The early stage of Wen-hsueh chi-k'an did not have a clearly-defined direction. But since around 1969, the magazine began to criticize modernist literature for its abandonment of social reality. The call for social realist literature was imminent. Thus, with the help of the special socio-political milieu of the seventies, "hsiang-t'u" literature finally made its triumphant return to the Taiwan literary scene.
Diplomatic Setbacks and Political Opposition

The seventies was an eventful decade for Taiwan society. It seemed that many of the problems concerning politics, economics, and culture which had remained unsolved from the past two decades suddenly broke through the surface. Since 1949, the Nationalist government in Taiwan had claimed legitimacy in representing all of China, even though the land mass of Taiwan only constituted .37% of China's total and the population 1%. The recovery of the mainland was the announced political goal of the government. Many policies were geared to achieving this goal. After the successful atomic bomb test of People's Republic of China in 1964, however, the government in Taiwan began to speak less about recovering the mainland and more about the construction of Taiwan. Beginning in 1970, a series of diplomatic setbacks further speeded up the tendency of "Taiwanization" of the government.

The Tiao-yu T'ai (or Senkaku) Incident in 1971 was the first in the series. Tiao-yu T'ai was a group of islands to the northeast of Taiwan occupied by the United States since the end of World War II. Both Japan and Taiwan laid claim to these islands...
after oil had been discovered there. The United States, nevertheless, decided to return them to Japan in 1972. To protest this decision, students from Taiwan studying in the United States organized mass demonstrations. This also affected college campuses on Taiwan which had been usually characterized by political calm. The movement of "Defending Tiao-yu T'ai" was enthusiastically responded to by many students and intellectuals on the island province. The Movement resembled somewhat the May Fourth Movement of 1919 in its anti-imperialist (anti-Japanese and anti-American in this case) sentiments.

Immediately following this incident, Taiwan (the Republic of China) chose to withdraw from the unfavorable environment of the United Nations in the fall of 1971. The China seat in the organization was automatically given to the People's Republic. The withdrawal marked the beginning of Taiwan's more isolated political status in the international arena. When President Richard Nixon issued the Shanghai Communique with Chou En-lai in 1972, great anxiety was aroused among the people of Taiwan and within their government. In the same year, Japan severed its diplomatic ties with Taipei and established relations
with Peking. The most serious blow did not come until the end of 1978 when President Jimmy Carter announced the "normalization" of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. Many people in Taiwan felt betrayed by their long-term ally. However, they reached the consensus of "united we stand, divided we fall" at those disastrous moments.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Taiwan's economy faced some difficulties caused by its export-oriented strategy. Protectionist quotas against Taiwan's exports were raised by its trading partners; wages and other costs rose while the living standard was rising; Taiwan became less competitive compared to other countries with lower labor costs and more abundant resources. Upgrading industry was the measure taken to solve these problems. The result was that Taiwan's economy not only survived the decade but continued to grow.

After almost two decades of internal stability, Taiwan society began to experience some political stirrings in the beginning of the seventies. Students and young intellectuals pressed for political reforms in a magazine entitled Ta-hsueh (The Intellectual). Their demands included greater
democratization: more political participation, freedom of speech, an end to martial law, etc. This group of intellectuals, however, was finally dispersed as a result of the government's pacification and suppression.  

After the mid-seventies, more natives were appointed to top party and government posts in the process of "Taiwanization" of the KMT Party. Tangwai (nonparty) activists (predominantly Taiwanese) nevertheless continued to press for political liberalization. They used magazines to publicize their criticisms and ideas between election campaigns. Although the ideological background of those nonparty activists differed, they cooperated tactically in the elections.  

The conflict between the KMT Party and nonparty activists finally culminated in a face-to-face showdown in the Mei-li Tao Incident of 1979. By the time of the incident, an organized opposition group had been formed by some radical nonparty activists. The group was often referred to as Mei-li Tao group since it used the magazine Mei-li Tao as the means of voicing criticisms of the KMT Party and popularizing political ideals. Members of this group included Shih Ming-te
On December 10, 1979, International Human Rights Day, the Mei-li Tao group held a mass rally in Kaohsiung. During the demonstration, conflicts between the police and the demonstrators erupted. The leaders of the Mei-li Tao group were arrested and then sentenced to jail terms. After the incident, opposition groups did not regain their strength until the mid eighties when many of the Mei-li Tao group were released. In the political movements of the eighties, the Mei-li Tao group became the backbone of the major opposition party, the Min Chin Tang Democratic Progressive Party.

The Controversy over Modernist Poetry

In addition to the awakening in the political arena, there was another kind of awakening taking place in literary circles in the 1970s. That was the controversy over modernist poetry. The overwhelming westernization of modern Chinese poetry in Taiwan began to face harsh criticism in the beginning of the seventies. Kuan Chieh-min (or also known as John Kwan-Terry) published two articles in 1972 to attack Chinese
modernist poetry. For Kuan, Chinese modernist poets were "insulated in feeling and purpose and committed to worlds that are arbitrary and idiosyncratic ... and removed, both in language and action, from the 'common world' to which our great writers all belonged." His criticism was echoed by a number of critics who could no longer withhold their doubts and worries about the direction of modern Chinese poetry. T'ang Wen-piao , for instance, attacked modern Chinese poetry for its indulgence in superficial aestheticism and evasion of social reality. He went so far as to declare the death of modern Chinese poetry and urge the younger generation to establish a new kind of realistic literature.

Yen Yuan-shu 颜元叔 , a professor of Western Literature revealed his disagreement with T'ang Wen-piao's view on literature. In his opinion, T'ang's utilitarian literary view was derived from some premises, such as the common people are superior to aristocrats; the masses are superior to the individual; the proletariat are superior to intellectuals, etc. Yen pointed out that the social function was merely one of many functions of literature. There was no reason, he contended, to discriminate against other functions of
literature. Yen concluded that literature ought to be the free expression of the all-embracing life and "art for art's sake" ought to have its standing ground among other aesthetic views.70

Modernist poets also made their counterattacks after a series of criticisms of modernist poetry had been published. One of the most noticeable rebuttal was made by Yu Kuang-chung . In his article entitled "Shih-jen ho tsui?" 詩人何罪 (What Crime Does a Poet Commit), Yu argued that poets could do little about social reality although they should be concerned for society. To Yu, the ultimate obligation of a poet was to write good poems, not to reform the society. He accused T'ang Wen-piao and others of proposing an arbitrary left-leaning literary view.71

Generally speaking, Kuan Chieh-ming's criticism of modernist poetry in Taiwan was basically directed at its lack of "Chinese spirit" (defined as "the spirit of the language, the whole drift and pressure given by the whole body of poetry written in Chinese.")72 T'ang Wen-piao, nevertheless, went a step further, to champion an extreme utilitarian literary view. He attacked not only modernist poetry but all poetry in general. In his opinion, poetry could not contribute anything to the
society and was nothing but a "spiritual narcotic" distributed by the privileged literati. As we have seen, his utilitarian literary view was by no means acceptable to Yen Yuan-shu, Yu Kuang-chung and those who held a more liberal view on literature. In their minds, literature is all-embracing in nature. Thus, they asserted that each person might have special emphasis on his literary view but should be tolerant toward other different views.

Although not everyone who criticized modernist poetry shared the same utilitarian view with T'ang Wen-piao, most critics did agree that modernist poetry had become too abstruse to be fully appreciated by its readers. Whether or not Chinese literature in Taiwan should model itself after Western modernism without reservation began to be questioned by many intellectuals. The controversy over modernist poetry was gradually extended to that over modernist fiction. Modernist fiction which prevailed throughout the sixties faced its challenge of a new social-realist literary trend in the seventies. This trend was represented by the genre of "hsiang-t'u" literature.
The Reemergence of "Hsiang-t' u" Literature

Series of setbacks in the diplomatic front in the seventies made the Taiwan government and its people shift more of their attention to the social reality of the island. With this psychological change, "hsiang-t' u" literature, which depicts the social reality of Taiwan, was well received by the reading public. As mentioned before, "hsiang-t' u" literature, taking its root in the Japanese Occupation Period and remaining as a minor literary current during the fifties and sixties, finally replaced modernist fiction to become the major literary trend in the seventies.

There are some characteristics shared by "hsiang-t' u" literature of this stage and that of the previous stages, the most obvious being the regional origin of "hsiang-t' u" writers. To be a native Taiwanese is the first qualification of being a "hsiang-t' u" writer. This concept has been carried to an extreme. Ch'i-teng Sheng (pen name of Liu Wu-hsiung 刘武雄 ), despite the highly modernist traits in his works, has often been considered a "hsiang-t' u" writer simply because he is a native son.
Although "hsiang-t'u" literature is not exactly equivalent to "rural literature", a large proportion of this literature uses the countryside as its background setting. This phenomenon reflects the fact that Taiwan's agricultural economy was not transformed into an industrial one until the mid-sixties, rather late in terms of the whole development of "hsiang-t'u" literature. Traces of how Taiwan society went through the transition period can be discerned in some works of "hsiang-t'u" literature of the seventies, such as Huang Ch' un-ming's "Lo" 龜 (A Gong), Sung Tse-lai's Pien-ch'ien te Niu-t'iao-wan 為牛跳牆, (Niu-t'iao-wan in Transition). A marked difference between "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies and that of the preceding stages can be found in the more urban elements are included in the former. In other words, the evolution of "hsiang-t'u" literature since the Occupation Period down to the seventies reflects the social history of Taiwan during the same period. In Ch'en Ying-chen's "Yeh hsing huo-ch'e" 夜行貨車 (Night Freight, 1979), a relatively later work of "hsiang-t'u" literature, urban middle class people, instead of country folk, become the protagonists of the story.
Another common feature found in many works of "hsaing-t'u" literature is the depiction of the life of people from the lower strata of Taiwan society. From Lai Ho's (1894-1943) "I-kan ch'eng-tsai"—A Steelyard down to many works of "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies, such as Wang T'o's "Chiang-chin liang-ch'ien yuan"—Two Thousand Bonus, Yang Ch'ing-ch'u's "Sheng" (Promotion), and the like, constitutes a tradition of realistic portrayal of the helplessness of little people. Yen Yuan-shu has observed:

In history, social realism may have leaned too much to life of the lower echelons on the social scale; it is consequently related in general impression to the proletariat in literature. However, this is a mistaken impression. For society is not composed solely of the proletariat, and the realities of the life of the proletariat are not the sole social realities. Social realism, correctly understood, should be taken as the realistic depiction of people of all walks in society.75

In the major works of "Hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies, we do see an emphasis on "the realities of the life of the proletariat". The works are peopled with farmers, workers, and fishermen. This phenomenon may be attributed to two factors. The first one is that people from the lower social classes are the ones the authors feel most familiar with since many "hsiang-t'u" writers
came originally from the countryside or small towns in Taiwan. The second one is the humanistic concern for the underprivileged "hsiang-t'u" writers appear to share. The first factor may be present alone or simultaneously with the second factor. The second factor, however, never appears independently.

Literary works which result from the first factor often have a nostalgic appeal. Some earlier stories of Huang Ch'ūn-ming's, such as "Yu" (Fish), "Erh-tzu te ta wan-ou" (The Son's Big Doll), reveal this kind of characteristic. The works of Wang T'o and Yang Ch'ing-ch'u, nevertheless, demonstrate a strong humanistic concern for the poor and helpless. Readers hardly fail to capture the sense of commitment and the cry for attention in their writings. Generally speaking, Wang and Yang are more socially motivated than other "hsiang-t'u" writers in the seventies. This may also explain why they became political activists and were later involved in the Mei-li Tao Incident in 1979.

Since most characters portrayed in "hsiang-t'u" literature are native Taiwanese, the use of dialectal expressions becomes one of its inevitable traits. Like their pioneers in the previous stages, "hsiang-t'u" writers in the seventies employ a certain amount of
Taiwanese dialect whenever and wherever necessary to convey the sense of vividness and verisimilitude. The issue of writing in Taiwanese, however, ceased to be central in the seventies. This may be explained by two factors. First of all, the issue had its politico-cultural connotation during the Occupation period. Because of Taiwan's colonial status, writing in Taiwanese became a gesture of resisting cultural "Japanization". As for in the seventies, the issue loses its politico-cultural connotation since the historical condition has changed. Secondly, "hsiang-t'u" writers in the seventies belong to the postwar generation. They and their readers were predominantly educated in the environment in which Mandarin was the standard language. Writing in Chinese in the seventies could no longer create difficulties for their readers as it could in the Occupation period. The degree of using dialectal expressions varies among "hsiang-t'u" writers in the seventies. Wang Chen-ho and Ch'en Ying-chen may represent the two ends of the spectrum. In Wang's stories, such as "Chia-chuang i niu-ch'e" (An Oxcart for Dowry) and "Liang-chih lao-hu" (Two Tigers), he uses a considerable amount of dialectal expressions in the dialogues to imitate as closely as
possible what might actually be said in real life. Without reading the explanatory notes appended after the text, even people who know Taiwanese dialect are bewildered by some of the expressions. Quite unlike Wang Chen-ho, Ch'en Ying-chen's language has little trace of Taiwanese dialect. Still, in appropriately portraying certain characters (for instance, Americans working in the Taiwan branch of multinational corporations), Ch'en has sometimes blended a certain amount of English into the dialogues. Huang Ch'un-ming and Yang Ch'ing-ch'u do not depend upon Taiwanese dialect as heavily as Wang Chen-ho does. They limit their use of dialectal expressions to one more familiar so as to prevent readers' distraction.

Yeh Shih-t'ao pointed out that there had been an anti-imperialist and anti-feudalistic tradition underlying the history of Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the colonial period. However, the characteristic of anti-feudalism carries little weight on "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies. The fact that some works from this period are reminiscences of the past seems to contradict the anti-feudalistic tradition. Huang Ch'un-ming's "Ni ssu i-chih lao-mao" (The Drowning of an Old Cat), for example, takes a rather sympathetic view of a hero who is superstitious and
attempts to resist modernization. The tradition of anti-imperialism does have its echoes in the seventies when Taiwan experiences continuous adversities in the diplomatic front and when "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians begin to identify "hsiang-t'u" literature with national literature (as opposed to modernist literature). The United States and Japan are the two major countries which have strong impact on the political, economic and cultural spheres of Taiwan society. Thus, they automatically become the primary target of criticism in this anti-imperialist trend. Huang Ch'un-ming's "Sa-yu-na-la: tsai-chien" (Sayonara: Goodbye, 1973) portrays some vulgar and lecherous Japanese tourists in Taiwan while Ch'en Ying-chen's "Yeh hsing huo-ch'e" focuses on the arrogant and patronizing attitude of an American entrepreneur.

The development of "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies was not only parallel to but interwoven with the political movement during the same period. Hsia Ch'ao (China Tide) was the journal which dealt with the theoretical underpinning of political opposition as well as of "hsiang-t'u" literature. Its articles criticized the government's social and economic policies and called for more attention to be paid to the
well-being of workers and peasants. Major "hsiang-t'ú" theoreticians, such as Yeh Shih-t'ao, Yu T'ien-ts'ung, also published their arguments in the journal.

The mergence of literary and political strains in the seventies was inevitable since nonparty activists and "hsiang-t'ú" writers were predominantly, if not exclusively, native Taiwanese. One thing has to be made clear that many "hsiang-t'ú" writers started their literary career in the 1960s and were not very conscious of their regional origin at first. But after they became more socially aware, some of them decided to resort to political means to solve problems that their pens failed to solve. The debate over "hsiang-t'ú" literature beginning in 1977 seemed to intensify further the distinction between natives and non-natives and the opposition between the government and political dissidents. The fact that two "hsiang-t'ú" writers, Wang T'o and Yang Ch'ing-ch'u, participated in the Mei-li Tao Incident in 1979 and were sentenced to jail terms signifies the heavy political connotation of "hsiang-t'ú" literature.

As far as the reevaluation of Western modernism in Chinese literature is concerned, the controversy about modernist poetry can be seen as a prelude to the later
debate over "hsiang-t'u" literature. Compared to the controversy over modernist poetry, the debate over "hsiang-t'u" literature was a dispute of greater complexity. It touched off many social, political, and economic conflicts which had come to a head in the seventies. The aftershock of the debate reverberated for a period of time even after it prematurely ended in 1978. A fuller discussion of that debate is to be given in the next chapter.
Notes to Chapter Two


2. Yeh, Shih-t'ao. *T'ai-wan wen-hsueh shih kang*, p. 70.


5. Yeh, pp.70-71.


10. Yeh, p. 77.

11. Ibid., p. 79.


15. Gold, p. 56.

16. Ibid., p. 55.

17. Ibid., p. 59.

18. Ibid., p. 61.

20. As Chow Tse-tsung has pointed out, the term "May Fourth period" is loosely used by many Chinese authors. For some, it refers to a period from 1915 or 1916 to 1923 while for others its time span ends in 1925 or even 1938. See Chow, pp. 5-6.


25. Yang Kuei, for instance, was sentenced to twelve year jail term for alleged involvement in Communist activities. See Yeh, p. 91.


27. Ibid., p. 626.


29. Ibid., p. 10.

30. Ibid.


33. Yeh, pp. 88-90.

34. Gold, p. 76.

35. Ibid., p. 74.


37. Ibid.

38. Gold, p. 89.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 90.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.


46. Ibid., p. 16.

47. Lee Ou-fan, for instance, criticized that the lack of cultural and historical backdrop had made modernism in Taiwan become more form than content, more stylistic and technical showmanship than a doctrine of profound philosophical implications. Ibid., p. 20.


49. Ibid., p. 125.


52. Yeh, pp. 116-117.


54. Yeh, pp. 117-118.


56. Yeh, 137.


58. Ibid., p. 92.

59. Ibid., p. 93.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., p. 94.

62. Ibid., p. 108.

63. Ibid., p. 93-94.

64. Ibid., p. 114.

65. Ibid., p. 116.

66. Ibid., p. 117.

67. According to Ch'en Ying-chen, Kuan's two articles were originally written in English and then translated into Chinese. See Ch'en's "Ssu-shih nien lai T'ai-wan wen-i ssu-ch'ao chih yen-pien" (The Evolutionary Changes of Trends of Literary Thoughts in Taiwan in the Last Four Decades), in Chung-hua tsa-chih (China Magazine), 25, no. 287 (June, 1987), p. 41.


73. T'ang, "Shih te mo-lo", p. 48.


75. Yen Yuan-shu. "Social Realism in Recent Chinese Fiction in Taiwan", in Asian Culture Quarterly 4, no. 2 (Summer 1976), pp. 16-39.

76. Huang Ch'un-ming confessed that the depiction of the lower social class in his early stories, such as "Erh-tzu te ta wan-ou" (The Son's Big Doll), "Yu" (Fish), and "Ni ssu i-chih lao-mao" (The Drowning of an Old Cat), were not conciously based on humanistic concern. See "I-ke tao-che te pei-pi hsin-ling" (A Vulgar Mentality of An Author), in Hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh t'ao-lun chi, p. 640.

77. Yeh, Shih-t'ao. "T'ai-wan hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh shih tao-lun" (An Introduction to the History of Taiwan Hsiang-t'u Literature), in T'ai-wan hsiang-t'u tso-chia lun chi, pp. 1-25.

78. Gold, State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle, p. 116.
CHAPTER III

The Debate over Taiwan "Hsiang-t'u" Literature

Many critics have been aware of the disproportionate politicization of the debate over Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature and tend to believe that its political entanglement has diminished its significance as a literary debate. C. T. Hsia even points out the fact that modern Chinese literary historians have paid too much attention to literary debates which deviate from the literature in question. According to him, these debates, instead, focus on descriptive labels and prescriptive slogans adopted by critics to direct the writers to take the correct road. The debate over Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature, in Hsia's opinion, is one of these kinds of debates.¹

Undoubtedly, Hsia's remarks on literary debates stem from his general reluctance to consider the socio-political factors which have noticeably affected the development of modern Chinese literature. His avoidance of discussing ideological conflicts in greater depth is
well demonstrated in his book *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*. Due to his failure to include political factors in his consideration of literary works, many debates in modern Chinese literature are, in his book, reduced to "the level of personal quarrels and struggles between individual coteries." Therefore, in order to remedy the flaw in C. T. Hsia's book and to see the development of modern Chinese literature in a different light, to reinvestigate and reevaluate those literary debates or even to rewrite the history of modern Chinese literature in its social-political context have become an urgent task confronting people who are engaged in Chinese literary studies.

Socio-political-economic Issues in the Debate

As the previous chapter shows, the debate over Taiwan "hsiang-t' u" literature took place at a historical juncture when socio-political-economic issues had a tangible relevance to the literary issue. In other words, among people involved in the debate, those who share similar views on socio-political-economic issues tended to have similar views on literature. Thus, in the discussion of the debate, socio-political-economic
issues should not be regarded as peripheral factors but determinative and intrinsic ones.

In his *Literary Theory*, after disputing the claim that knowledge can be value-free, Terry Eagleton argues:

The largely concealed structure of values which informs and underlies our factual statements is part of what is meant by "ideology". By "ideology" I mean, roughly, the ways in which what we say and believe connects with the power-structure and power-relations of the society we live in.4

And further:

I do not mean by "ideology" simply the deeply entrenched, often unconscious beliefs which people hold; I mean more particularly those modes of feeling, valuing, perceiving and believing which have some kind of relation to the maintenance and reproduction of social power.5

In the case of the debate over "hsiang-t'u" literature, the satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the existing socio-political-economic structure of Taiwan society played a decisive role in the arguments about literature presented by both sides. Since "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians were comparatively more socially conscious, they often revealed their dissatisfaction with the present socio-political-economic structure. They attempted to call people's attention to the harsh
conditions of workers and peasants and the need for social change. Politically, they protested against one-party rule of the mainlander-dominated Kuomintang and demanded for more democracy. They criticized Taiwan's economy for being too dependent on foreign capital, especially those of the United States and Japan. To them, "hsiang-t'u" literature, the vehicle of social criticism, the literature of common people, and the embodiment of nationalism, represented a healthy literary trend to reverse the bad influence which modernist literature had brought to Taiwan society. The other camp of the debate was comprised primarily of those mainlanders who identified with the KMT regime and had a vested interest in the stability of existing power structure. They were concerned with the potentially subversive nature of "hsiang-t'u" literature because it sought to expose social inequalities and injustices in ways reminiscent of the leftist literature of the thirties. Thus, on the issue of "hsiang-t'u" literature, they took a very cautious stand. They criticized it for its narrowness and lack of broader vision. To some of them, the overemphasis on social realities could be easily caught in the trap of the separatist theory, i.e., the theory of an independent Taiwan, and work
against the political ideal of reunification with China.

The Debate

Starting from 1976, as "hsiang-t'u" literature attracted more and more attention from intellectuals and gradually became a major literary trend, some critics began to express unfavorable opinions. Some said that "('hsiang-t'u') writers should broaden their vision"; others said "hsiang-t'u" works "do not uglify our society."6

In response to these criticisms, One of the major "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians, Yeh Shih-t'ao, wrote an article "T'ai-wan hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh shih tao-lun" (Introduction to the History of Taiwan Hsiang-t' u Literature) to expound the historical origin and characteristics of Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature. In this article, he linked "hsiang-t'u" literature of the seventies with the tradition of Taiwan New Literature Movement dating back to the Occupation Period.7

The controversy over "hsiang-t'u" literature, however, was not aroused until major "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians Wang T'o, Ch'en Ying-chen and Yu T'ien-ts'ung published their respective articles. Among
these articles, Wang T'o's "Shih 'hsien-shih chu-i' wen-hsueh, pu-shih 'hsiang-t'u' wen-hsueh" (It is 'Realist' Literature, Not 'Hsiang-t'u' Literature) was one of the earliest pieces.8

At the beginning of the article, Wang analyzes the socio-political-economic background of "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies. Then, he goes on to criticize Taiwan's economy for being exploited by the super economic powers, particularly the U. S. and Japan. In his opinion, Taiwan's economic growth and prosperity was achieved to a certain extent at the expense of cheap labor and agricultural products. Wang also points out that the intellectuals in Taiwan had been so eagerly absorbing Western thought and values that they became negligent to the tradition of anti-imperialism in modern Chinese history. Literary writers in Taiwan, Wang argues, also blindly imitated and plagiarized Western modernist literature, a product of decadent capitalist society and irrelevant to Taiwan's social reality. In conclusion, Wang praises "hsiang-t'u" literature for its simplicity, vitality and, more importantly, its truthful reflection of social reality.
Wang T'o's more concrete literary views can be found in his article entitled "Erh-shih shih-chi T'ai-wan wen-hsueh fan-ch'an te tung-hsiang' (The General Tendency of the Literary Development in Taiwan in the Twentieth Century). In the article, he asserts that literature should take root in social reality and correctly reflect the internal contradictions of society. It is his conviction that only realist literature, with its sincere moral courage, passionate emotion, can generate the power of persuasion. In Wang's opinion, literary movement ought to develop into a social movement or to merge with existent social movements so that literature can function as a means of improving society.

In his article "San-shih nien lai T'ai-wan te sheh-hui ho wen-hsueh" (Taiwan's Society and Literature in the Last Three Decades), Ch'en Ying-chen summarized the social phenomena and literary development in Taiwan from the fifties down to the seventies as being dominated by foreign influences. In his opinion, modern literature (especially modern poetry) in Taiwan which patterned itself after Western modernism became abstruse, empty, and lacked Chinese national character. "Hsiang-t'u"
literature in the seventies, according to Ch'en, was an effort made by literary writers in Taiwan to discard formalism and subjectivism, which removes literature from social reality, and to retrieve the Chinese national identity.

Ch'en's view was further elaborated in another article "Chien-li min-tsu wen-hsueh te feng-ko" 建立民族文學的風格(Establish the Style of National Literature). In it, he particularly emphasized the fact that Taiwan was a part of China, and hence the reality in Taiwan was the most relevant for all the people- mainlanders and Taiwanese- in Taiwan at the present historical stage. Thus, "hsiang-t'u" literature, to him, was a kind of literature depicting the life of Chinese people and the endemicity of Chinese soil, and should not be regarded as shallow regional literature.

The last major "hsiang-t'u" theoretician among the three was Yu T'ien-ts'ung. He advocated the creed of "literature for life's sake" and asserted that the essential criterion of evaluating a given literary work should lie in whether the work is in the interest of the majority or not. Yu pointed out that literature does not reflect the reality of each individual but that of the entire people. Thus, he contended that the discussion of modern Chinese literature should be
related to the fate that China has encountered during the last century and the mention of world literary trends should not leave out the damages brought about by the imperialism that is the consequence of capitalism.¹⁴

In Yu's opinion, the most important characteristic of "hsiang-t'u" literature was its embedded tendency of opposing both cultural compradors and the blind faith in things of foreign origin. This tendency, he believed, would reverse the prevailing trend of "total westernization" since the May Fourth period.¹⁵

Despite the justification and glorification of "hsiang-t'u" literature rendered by three major "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians, some critics suspected the nature and altruism of "hsiang-t'u" literature. Yin Cheng-hsiung, for instance, reminded readers of the similarity between "hsiang-t'u" literature and the proletarian literature of the thirties.¹⁶ The most influential criticisms, however, came from two distinguished writers, P'eng Ko and Yu Kuang-chung.

P'eng Ko, the chief editorial writer of Chung-yang jih-pao (Central Daily News) (the Nationalist Party's organ) voiced his disagreement with Wang T'o's analysis of Taiwan's socio-economic structure. In the article entitled "Pu t'an jen-hsing,
ho yu wen-hsueh" 不談人性，何有文學? (How Can There Be Literature without Talking About Humanity?), he reaffirms Taiwan's economic achievements and rejected the label of "colonial economy" for the economy of Taiwan.⁷ P'eng further criticizes "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians, Wang T'o, Ch'eng Ying-chen, and Yu T'ien-ts'ung in particular, for overemphasizing the distinctions among different social classes instead of the basic differentiation between good and evil. This theoretical bias, in his opinion, would result in a literature characterized by ambiguity, harshness, and hatred. P'eng argues that a writer should enjoy the freedom of what he ought to write and how he writes it and that the limits of this freedom can only be set up by the writer's conscience. He does not deny that literature may impact on society but insists that the social function of literature should neither be the only criterion of judging the value of literary works, nor be the sole concern of a literary writer. Instead, according to P'eng, a writer should be more concerned with the sincerity of his work as well as the perfection of his work.

The most serious attack against "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians in the debate was made by Yu Kuang-chung,
a reputable poet and an important defender of modernist poetry. In his article entitled "Lang lai le" (The Wolf is Coming), Yu accused the advocates of "hsiang-t'u" literature of promoting a literature which bears much resemblance to the literature for workers, peasants and soldiers championed by Mao Tse-tung at his famous and influential "Talks on Literature and Art" at the Yenan Forum in 1942. Yu also pointed out that certain arguments made by some "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians coincided with Mao's view on destroying feudalistic, individualistic, "decadent" and all kinds of non-proletarian literary sentiment.

P'eng Ko and Yu Kuang-chung's criticisms not only exacerbated the concern of intellectuals and literati, whose fear of Communism had not yet subsided; it also caused uneasiness among government officials. The uneasiness was demonstrated in the manifesto of the Symposium on Literature and Art, which took place on August 29, 1977, immediately after P'eng and Yu's articles had been published. The manifesto stressed that literary workers should exalt in their works the spirit of freedom and humanity and denounce the literature of slavery, materialism and class struggle. To "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians, the message was clear enough to
inform them that the government was not in favor of the kind of literature that they were attempting to promote. P'eng Ko and Yu Kuang-chung were soon labeled as "imperial writers" who were acting as thugs for the KMT. The political ideologies of the debate thus surged to the surface.

Unlike P'eng Ko and Yu Kuang-chung, Wang Wen-hsing, an avant-garde fiction writer and a professor of Western literature, was more concerned with the aesthetics of literature. In an interview, Wang discussed the relationship between social function and artistic value of literature.21 According to him, it is not the advocacy of the mass literature but the chauvinism of those advocates which should be opposed. The social function of literature and other disciplines in the humanities, he argued, is merely of secondary importance. In Wang's opinion, the primary function of art is to expand the life experiences of their appreciators rather than to improve social conditions. Any literary work, whether it is socially aware or not, eventually has to depend on its artistic form to acquire its artistic value. Without the support of the aesthetics, he contended, the artistic value of a literary work will not be able to survive the specific
time and space within which it is written. Later in a seminar, he criticized the aesthetics of "hsiang-t'u" literature for being retrogressive and overly formulistic.

As a result of his remarks, Wang immediately became the target of many counterattacks by the pro-"hsiang-t'u" group. Hu Ch'iu-yuan, for instance, wrote an article entitled "Lun Wang Wen-hsing te 'nonsense' chih 'sense'" (On the Sense in Wang Wen-hsing's Nonsense) to criticize Wang's refusal to see things from a national point of view.22 Wang did not respond to Hu's criticism presumably because he wanted to end this seemingly endless war of words.

The heat of the debate over "hsiang-t'u" literature gradually cooled off in 1978, a year following the Symposium. In 1979, two "hsiang-t'u" writers, Wang T'o and Yang Ch'ing-ch'u, were arrested and sentenced to jail terms on for their involvement in the Mei-li Tao Incident. Since then, "hsiang-t'u" literature became too sensitive an issue to talk about and the debate thus ended.23

There was a postlude to the debate. Some of Wang Wen-hsing's associates from the Modern Literature (a literary journal founded in the sixties, devoting itself to the introduction of and experiments with Western
modernism) group, although they shared similar views with Wang, did not express theirs until the feverish debate was over. Leo Ou-fan Lee, simply pointed out that the crisis confronting modern Chinese literature can be attributed to two factors: One is the narrow concepts of social commitment, and concomitantly patriotism; the other is the tradition of realism in creative writing. To him, the former factor confines the freedom of a writer's thinking (literature produced under such condition is liable to become subservient to politics) while the latter factor confines the subject matter and imagination of a creative writer.  

Another scholar and literary critic as well, Joseph S. M. Lau 呂紹銘 first criticized "hsiang-t'u" theoretician Yu T'ien-ts'ung's definition of literature for being devoid of individual verve and vision. He then utilized some works of a non-"hsiang-t'u" fiction writer during the seventies to demonstrate the fact that good literature can still be produced even without sticking to the realities of this time and this place. The writer that Lau chose was Li Yung-p'ing 李永平, a Malaysian student of Chinese origin who came to Taiwan to study. In contrast with works of "hsiang-t'u" literature, Li's stories take place in a very different
setting, Sarawak, in Borneo. In the end of his essay, Lau related Li Yung-p'ing to Nabokov, a true believer in the self-sufficiency of art and concluded that literature, as an art, is to be judged not by the ideas it carries but by whether or not the artifact in question is able to actualize the contours and the landscape of the specific world imagined or created.²⁵

Wang Wen-hsing, Leo Ou-fan and Joseph S. M. Lau, influenced by their Western literary training, were more concerned with the fact that the overvaluation of "hsiang-t'u" literature might undermine the healthy development of literature and the unbiased assessment of it. Generally speaking, their literary views echo the opinions that Yen Yuan-shu and Yu Kuang-chung had expressed in the controversy over modernist poetry several years before. To them, "art for art's sake" should also be given proper consideration when talking about "art for life's sake" and literature should also deal with an individual's subjective world besides depicting the objective reality of the outside world. In this sense, their dispute with those "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians can be seen as the aesthetic conflict between committed literature and autonomous literature,
or, in Lukacs' terms, Realism and Modernism.

Realism/Modernism Controversy in the West

Insofar as the aesthetic issue is concerned, the debates between Realism and Modernism among the writers of the German Left in the 1920s and 30s may shed some light on the fundamental nature of these two literary trends and the analysis of the debate over "hsiang-t'u" literature. Important figures in these debates include Georg Lukacs, Bertolt Brecht, and Theodor Adorno.

Georg Lukacs, a Marxist theoretician of realism, contrasted the differences between realism and modernism as follows: in the realist literature, man, the focal point of literary content, is conceived as a social animal, individual existence cannot be distinguished from their social and historical environment. For modernist writers, man is "by nature solitary, asocial, unable to enter into the relationship with other human beings." The literature of realism aims at a truthful reflection of reality while the attenuation of actuality is a major tendency in modernist literature. Each descriptive detail in realistic literature is both individual and typical whereas modernist ideology denies the typical.
The ideal realistic writing, to Lukacs, can only be found in the works of European realists of the 19th century, such as Balzac and Tolstoy. In his view, modern realism "has lost its capacity to depict the dynamics of life, and thus its representation of capitalist reality is inadequate, diluted and constrained."\(^2\)

Bertolt Brecht, a playwright and a fellow Marxist, however, questioned Lukacs's concept of endurance. If the novels of Balzac or Tolstoy were only products of a particular phase of class history, he argued, could the principles of their fiction be recreated in a subsequent phase of history when the social reality of capitalism was quite different?\(^2\) Brecht insisted that realism should not be derived from particular existing works and that any possible means, "old and new, tried and untried, derived from art and derived from other sources" could be used to render reality.\(^2\) He criticized the conventional concept of "popular" for being ahistorical, static and undevelopmental. In his new interpretation, "popular" means "intelligible to the broad masses, adopting and enriching their forms of expression ..."\(^3\) To him, technical novelties would not render works of art incomprehensible to the masses.
Theodor Adorno made some revealing points on realist aesthetic theory. He pointed out that "the content of works of art is not real in the same sense as social reality." He opposed Lukacs's conception of art as knowledge. In his opinion, art "does not provide knowledge of reality by reflecting it photographically or 'from a particular perspective' but by revealing whatever is veiled by the empirical form assumed by reality". Contrary to Lukacs's assertion that "content determines form", Adorno stressed the importance of literary techniques by saying that "in literature the point of the subject matter can only be made effective by the use of techniques".

Comparison and Contrast

Although the debates among the above three writers were within the framework of Marxism and the debate over "hsiang-t'u" literature was not within any specific ideological framework, some similarities are discernible. The realism that "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians championed is precisely the kind of realism that Lukacs advocated. One of the major "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians, Ch'en Ying-chen, found modernist literature lacking in
terms of humanism and ethics and proposed to return to the European realistic traditions of the nineteenth century. Like Lukacs, "hsiang-t' u" theoreticians tend to believe that literature can truthfully reflect reality and fail to recognize what Adorno sees as "the dialectical tension between reality and the realm of art". In other words, they emphasize the cognitive aspect rather than the aesthetic aspect of realism. The stress of literary content over literary form is another similarity found in Lukacs's theory and "hsiang-t' u" theoreticians' discussions of literature. When Ch'en Ying-ch' en dismissed modernism as "an empty structure of formalism", he seemed to expel literary forms and techniques in the same breath. The arguments that Ch'en Ying-ch' en presents about the style of "national literature" and Yu T'ien-ts' ung about "national form" remains abstract and ideological and does not touch upon any technical issues.

If Lukacs's theory is "colored by the moralism that is typical of his weepings and wailings about subjectivist 'lack of reality,'" then the arguments of "hsiang-t' u" defenders are very much tinted with nationalism, or anti-imperialism. Wang T'o's nationalism is demonstrated in his criticism of the role
that foreign investments play in Taiwan's economy and his protest against the economic exploitation in Taiwan. Yu T'ien-ts'ung, like many intellectuals in the May Fourth Period, is preoccupied with the various humiliations which China has gone through since the Opium War (1839-1840). He thus asserts that the discussion of modern Chinese literature should be related to the fate that China has encountered during the last century. Ch'en Ying-chen considers Chinese literature in Taiwan as sharing identical features with literatures from other countries in the Third World. The similarity, to him, lies in the fact that they both originated from the movement of cultural enlightenment characterized by its anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. It is this nationalistic stand which leads to their advocacy of "national literature".

Some Arguments Reconsidered

Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature was repeatedly equated with national literature by its theoreticians simply because of its indigenous nature. But, to what extent, can Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature represent national literature? Do works of "hsiang-t'u" literature
show a certain amount of foreign influence? "Hsiang-t'u" theoreticians seemed to evade these questions. The latter question can be better answered through the examination of the works of some "hsiang-t'u" writers and will be dealt with in the next part of this study. The former question is certainly related to the way the political or cultural identity of Taiwan is perceived. For those who insist that Taiwan is an independent political or cultural entity, Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature can fully represent national literature. As for those who envision a reunified China of which Taiwan is only a part, they have to accept the fact that Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature is merely a branch of national literature, no more significant than the literary works produced in other areas of China. The political belief of three "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians mentioned above falls into the latter category. Thus, the full equation of Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature with national literature can only be seen as their political rhetoric.

"Hsiang-t'u" theoreticians criticize modernist writers for being self-indulgent and failing to reflect the social reality in Taiwan. This accusation may be in part defended by Fredric Jameson's argument that "realism is dependent on the possibility of access to
the forces of change in a given moment of history."\textsuperscript{40}

Compared to those who dwell in the urban areas of Taiwan, "hsiang-t'u" writers' rural origin in a sense gives them a more engaged vantage point from which they could witness the transitional social reality of the sixties, especially that of the lower classes. Whether one becomes a "hsiang-t'u" writer or a modernist writer is in part determined by one's regional origin and personal experiences.

"Hsiang-t'u" theoreticians claim that the popularity of "hsiang-t'u" literature was closely related to the socio-political climate of the seventies. By the same reasoning, the popularity of modernist literature in the sixties must have been generated by a different socio-political climate. Leo Lee has observed:

\begin{quote}
The nationalist government rules on the basis of a political myth—that they will "recover the mainland"—which serves both to reinforce the feeling of transitoriness among mainlanders who fled to the island and to alienate the indigenous Taiwanese population who have never set foot on the Chinese continent. The generally authoritarian style of the KMT government further induces political apathy, if not self-enforced silence. Since the 1960s, the success of the land reform programs and the commercialization of society have given rise to a pervasive middle-class mentality which is basically apolitical. The "masses" in Taiwan demand escapist entertainment: they are in no mood to confront a political reality which promises no certain future. Hemmed in from without and unable to find ready solutions to
\end{quote}
their political frustrations, the Chinese writers in Taiwan--mainlanders and native Taiwanese alike--have gradually turned inward, "to dwell in the personal world of sensory, subconscious and dream experience."41

Seen in this context, modernist literature in Taiwan in the sixties was in fact a product of political apathy or frustration. The social reality was not completely absent in the modernist literature but was reflected in a different way than it was in "hsiang-t'u" literature.

Fredric Jameson's argument is relevant here:

... Modernism would then not so much be a way of avoiding social content- in any case an impossibility for beings like ourselves who are 'condemned' to history and to the implacable sociability of even the most apparently private of our experiences- as rather of managing and containing it, secluding it out of sight in the very form itself, by means of specific techniques of framing and displacement which can be identified with some precision.42

The lack of similar cultural and historical backdrop which induces Western modernism, modernism in Taiwan appears affected and superficial. Although modernist writers claim their works to be cosmopolitan in nature, their "inability to transcend the Taiwan reality" makes their views somewhat "provincial."43 The major contribution of modernist literature in Taiwan in the sixties lies in its introduction of and experiment with
Western literary forms and techniques. It enriches the Chinese literary tradition by exploring different perspectives of life and humanity and by trying out new means of expression.

In the field of fiction, Chinese literary criticism since the late Ch'ing period has been dominated by its emphasis on the social function of fiction. Intellectuals in the Late Ch'ing period such as Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (1873-1929) and Yen Fu (1853-1921) considered the novel an instrument for national reform. Liang's essay entitled "Lun hsiao-shuo yu ch'un chih chih kuan-hsi" (On the Relationship between Fiction and the Government of Society) has been "most instrumental in effecting a new attitude among Chinese novelists and readers." In the essay, Liang maintained:

To renovate the people of a nation, the fictional literature of that nation must first be renovated. Thus to renovate morality, we must first renovate fiction; to renovate religion, we must first renovate fiction; to renovate manners, we must first renovate fiction; to renovate learning and the arts, we must first renovate fiction; and even to renew the people's hearts and remold their character, we must first renovate fiction. Why? It is because fiction exercises a power of incalculable magnitude over mankind.45
When Liang exaggerated the power of fiction, he simultaneously imposed a moral obligation on fiction writers. Under this influence, we see a whole procession of May Fourth fiction writers who were so dedicated to social realism that they seemed to be in the hope that social diseases might be cured through their efforts. It is this kind of commitment that makes Chinese fiction writers since the Literary Revolution (1917) fail to pay enough attention to the aesthetics of their works. Jaroslav Prusek has observed the fact that writers of new literature (beginning with the Literary Revolution) think too little about the artistic aspect of their works and theoreticians (whether literary or political) look upon all studies of artistic form unfavorably. In this sense, "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians can be regarded as heirs to the May Fourth tradition.

Some questions may appear intriguing at this juncture. What does "hsiang-t'u" literature look like in practice? Do works of "hsiang-t'u" literature accord with what their authors/theoreticians claim literature should be? How do "hsiang-t'u" writers deal with the artistic aspect of their works? How does "hsiang-t'u"
literature reflect the characteristics of a period of social transition during which it was produced? Do works of "hsiang-t'u" literature show any traces of western influence? In the next part of this study, these questions will be investigated primarily through the discussion of some representative works by three major "hsiang-t'u" writers, Hwang Chun-ming, Wang Chen-ho and Ch'en Ying-chen.
Notes to Chapter Three


3. Ho Huai-shuo has rightly pointed out the relationship between the two in his "Ping hsien k'an 'wen-hsueh fang-hsiang lun-chan'" (To Examine Fairly the Debate over 'Literary Direction') in Lien-ho fu-k'an (The Supplement of the United Daily News), (Taipei), March 4, 1978.


5. Ibid., p. 15.

6. Critics such as Ho Yen, Chu Yen, and Hua Hsia-tzu published articles to criticize "hsiang-t'u" literature. See Yeh Shih-t'ao's T'ai-wan wen-hsueh shih kang, p. 144.

7. The article was originally published in Hsia Ch'ao, no. 14 (May 1977) and later included in Hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh t'ao-lun chi, pp. 71-72.

8. The article was originally published in Hsien-jen-chang (Cactus), no. 2 (April 1977) and later included in Hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh t'ao-lun chi, p. 119.

9. The article was published under Wang's pen name Li Cho. See Chung-kuo lun t'an 4, no. 3 (May 1977), pp. 11-14.
10. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

11. The article was originally published in Chung-hua tsa-chih (China Magazine) no. 171 (Oct. 1977) and later included in the author's own work, Ku-erh te li-shih: li-shih te ku-erh (The History of an Orphan; An Orphan of the History), (Taipei: Yuan Ching, 1984), pp. 25-32.


13. _______________. "Min-tsu wen-hsueh yu min-tsu hsing-shih" (National Literature and National Form) in Hsien-jen-chang, no. 12, pp. 61-75.


15. Ibid.


19. Ibid.


22. See Hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh t'ao-lun chi, p. 745.

23. Here, I follow the date given by Yeh Shih-t'o in his T'ai-wan wen-hsueh shih kang, p. 143. Ch'en Ying-chen, nevertheless, considers that the debate ended in 1978. See his "Ssu-shih nien lai T'ai-wan wen-i ssu-ch'ao chih yen-pien".


30. Ibid.


32. Ibid., p. 162.

33. Ibid.


36. See note 34.

37. See notes 11 & 13.


41. Lee, Leo Ou-fan. "'Modernism' and 'Romanticism' in Taiwan Literature", in *Chinese Fiction from Taiwan*, p. 9.


43. See note 41.

44. Hsia, C. T. "Yen Fu and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao as Advocates of New Fiction" in *Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, ed. by Adele Austin Rickett. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 221-257. The term "hsiao-shuo", as C. T. Hsia pointed out in the article, is wider in coverage than its present-day English equivalent, "fiction." It is almost equivalent to all imaginative literature, with the exclusion of lyrical poetry.


PART II

THE LITERATURE
Among Taiwan "hsiang-t' u" writers in the seventies, Hwang Chun-ming is probably the one mentioned and discussed most often. The fact that his works can be clearly divided into two categories, the rural and the urban, exemplifies the characteristic of "hsiang-t' u" literature in the seventies as a product of a transitional period. Hwang's rural stories are usually narrated in a lyrical, nostalgic mood, while the narrative stance in his urban stories is mainly nationalist and satirical. Both Hwang's nostalgia of the agricultural society and his nationalist stance of anti-westernization may all result from "the same feeling of profound loss of past simplicity and purity through the ravages of modernization", a close equivalent of westernization for Taiwan society.

Born in Lo-tung , a small town in northeastern Taiwan, Hwang Chun-ming (1937- ) is a writer from the countryside. The people and things in his hometown
are the main source of his earlier works. He began to experience a different life style and his writing also underwent certain changes in subject matter and style after he moved to metropolitan Taipei. Hwang has taken a number of different jobs, such as, school teacher, editor for a radio station, clerk in an advertising agency, and stall keeper. These working experiences apparently provide him with the opportunity to deal with people and things different from those in his earlier life. In addition to writing, Hwang is also interested in producing documentary films concerning local customs and practices.3

Hwang Chun-ming started his writing career around 1962.4 His earliest works, such as "Wan huo" (Playing with Fire), "Pa p'ing-tzu sheng shang ch'u" (To Hoist the Bottle), did not attract much attention from readers and literary critics. These stories already demonstrate certain traits that characterize his later, better-known works. For instance, characters in all these stories are predominantly humble people from rural areas with whom the author is familiar. Most of these stories tend to be short and not dramatic themselves but always with a heart-warming touch. The heart-warming effect is
created mainly through, as we shall see in the later discussion, Hwang's idealization of the human relationship and life style in agricultural society.

From 1967 through 1973 is the period in which Hwang Chun-ming's writing reached its peak both in terms of quantity and quality. His most acclaimed stories, such as "K' an hai te jih-tzu" (Sea-Gazing Days) (1967), "Erh-tzu te ta wan-ou" (His Son's Big Doll) (1968), "Pin-kuo te tzu-wei" (The Taste of Apples) (1972), were all produced within this period. Among these stories, we see a gradual change in Hwang's focus of concern from rural settings to urban areas. Unlike the more detached narrator in his rural stories, the narrator in his urban stories apparently attempts to satirize certain unhealthy aspects of social phenomena. "Sa-yu-na-la, Tsai-chien" (Sayonara, Goodbye) (1973), the last work written during this period, for instance, appeals to Chinese readers' nationalistic sentiments by way of the narrator's sarcastic depiction of the arrogance and lechery of some Japanese tourists in Taiwan.

In a lecture given a year after the 1977 debate over "hsiang-t'u" literature, Hwang Chun-ming offered his own explanation for this change in his writing style.
the lecture, he confessed that the depiction of the lower social class in his earlier works was not due to a genuine humanitarian concern but was in fact due to an obsession with becoming a literary writer. He then attributed the change in his writing to the growing social awareness resulting from his realization of the close relationship between himself and society as a whole. In his opinion, a work of art becomes valuable only when it is helpful to the progress of society.8 Hwang Chun-ming apparently shared similar literary views with "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians, though there is no evidence to show that he was directly influenced by them. Nevertheless, it is natural that Hwang's grassroots background and his frequent association with the common people from lower social strata easily lead him to a more pragmatic view of art and literature.

After "Sayonara, Goodbye", Hwang Chun-ming continued to write along the same line. "Hsiao kua-fu" (Young Widows) (1974) and "Wo ai Ma-li" (I Love Mary) (1977) are his most recently published works. These two stories not only deal with a more immediate modern life style but touch upon certain intercultural issues. Hwang's new role as a satirist seems to culminate in the story of "I Love Mary". As for whether
or not he has succeeded in his treatment of this new subject matter will be a question pursued in this chapter.

The following discussion of Hwang Chun-ming's stories will focus mainly on those written after 1967 and will be limited to those which best exemplify the characteristics and distinctiveness of his works as representative pieces of "hsiang-t'u" literature. In order to demonstrate Hwang's attitude toward modernization exemplified in his works, the narrative stance of his rural and urban stories will be the major line to be pursued in the discussion.

The Nostalgic Mood in the Rural Stories

Almost without exception, the main characters in all of Hwang Chun-ming's stories, those with rural and urban settings alike, have a rural origin. The difference between the characters from his rural stories and those from his urban stories is that those the former are tightly bound to their roots and have never set foot in the modernized outside world, while those in the latter choose to migrate from the countryside to big cities for the sake of a better living.
Understandably, age is sometimes also a difference between these two groups of people. The major characters in rural stories tend to be older whereas the major characters in urban stories tend to be younger. For instance, the protagonists of the stories such as "Ch'ing-fan Kung te ku-shih" (The Story of Grandpa Ch'ing-fan) (1967) and "The Drowning of an Old Cat" are both in their seventies while the protagonists of the stories such as "Sayonara, Goodbye", and "I Love Mary" are only middle aged.

Generally speaking, the time settings for Hwang Chun-ming's rural stories span from around 1949 to 1961, when Taiwan society was in the process of modernization. Although the impact of modernization can hardly be felt in some of these stories, it does become an impending or even threatening force to the characters in other stories. "The Story of Grandpa Ch'ing-fan", "The Drowning of an Old Cat", and "The Gong" are the three stories which can best illustrate the kind of conflict existing between modern civilization and rural mentality.

Among the three above-mentioned stories, "The Story of Grandpa Ch'ing-fan" may stand as representative of the earlier stage of a period of social transition. The
story is mainly about the vicissitudes that the old man Grandpa Ch'ing-fan has gone through during his seventy and some years of life. A flash flood in his youth swept away the rest of his family members and took almost everything on the land. As the only survivor in the family, he has to start all over again on the stoney barren land. After several decades of hardship and constant struggles against floods, the old man is, as the story begins, very proud of being the owner of vast productive rice fields.

The opening scene describes ripe rice plants waving in the gentle breeze of the harvest season. Grandpa Ch'ing-fan and his grandson Ah-ming are on their way to the fields. While they are walking, the old man instructs the little one on some customs learned from his farming experiences, such as listening to the special sound made by ripening rice plants, referring to the sacrecrows as "brothers" (for fear that the sparrows in the fields might overhear it and see through the trick). The grandfather takes the trouble simply because that he hopes his grandson will someday inherit his ricefields, as well as other legacies handed down by his ancestors. The grandson, unlike other members in the family, shows a great deal of interest in farming.
The force of modernization is impending as the story approaches the end. The grandfather and the grandson catch a glimpse of modern life from the boat which they are rowing to cross a river. Instead of ferryboats as in the old days, people are now crossing the river in cars over a long bridge. The old man and the child see two unyielding truck drivers disputing on the bridge because of some traffic confusion. Despite the human clamor on the bridge, "the river beneath the bridge keeps flowing silently and unmindfully." The clear contrast seems to be intended to suggest not only that modern convenience has distanced man from nature but also that modernization accompanied by chaos and disorder may disrupt the tranquility of rural communities.

The story has a serene and idyllic appeal. It is narrated at a slow pace with much detail, which corresponds to the life style of the agricultural society. With only two main characters and little action, the story dwells on the deep affection between the grandfather and the grandson as well as the comparison and contrast of the past and the present. The most, perhaps the only dramatic moment in the story is the sudden breakout of the flood which changes the life of Grandpa Ch'ing-fan and makes his life story
worth telling and listening to.

The farming life depicted in the story is, to a certain extent, idealized. The laborious aspect of farming life is played down, while its joyful aspect is emphasized. The following episode of tasting a dewdrop on the leaf of a rice plant may serve as an example.

"Are we going over to the water wheel place?"
"Certainly."
"That's really great!" Ah-ming is so happy that he hops a little bit. He slips from the narrow ridge between two neighboring plots of rice fields and falls into the rice field. There is no water in the field, but the dewdrops on the spikes of rice plants all fall onto Ah-ming's body.
"Grandpa, did it rain last night?"
"No. Those are dewdrops! You see, Ah-ming, to have a heavy dewfall is a good sign before harvest. The grain of paddies that ripen early in this season will be very big and sweet. Look, how lovely those dewdrops are! Too bad you just broke several tens of thousands of them!" The old man appears very gratified. This makes Ah-ming involuntarily feel as if he were guilty of breaking some thing valuable and therefore he is upset about it.
"Ah-ming, lick it and see how sweet this dewdrop is." The old man lightly and tremulously uses his finger to dip a dewdrop on the leaf of a rice plant and lick it up with his tongue.
"Come! Do like this."!

The closeness to nature and the self-sufficiency of farming life in "The Story of Grandpa Ch'ing-fan" give way to an unavailing effort to resist the encroachment of modernization on a small village in "The Drowning of an Old Cat". The story takes place in a remote place
called Clear Spring Village. As its name suggests, the village is famous for its pure and sweet spring water. People from the nearby town come to swim in the spring every morning for the healthy effect of the water. The story is conceived around these townfolk's plan to build a swimming pool next to the Dragon-Eye Well in the village. Some elders in the village believe in geomancy and contend that the well has much to do with the well-being of the villagers. They strongly oppose the construction of the swimming pool because it will affect the well and consequently the entire village.

The hero of the story, Ah-sheng Po 阿盛伯 (uncle Ah-sheng), is the leading figure among the elders who from the very beginning spare no effort to fight against the construction. He first tries to convince his fellow villagers to stand by him at a village meeting and then mobilizes them to obstruct the construction work. But when the police force steps in, other villagers become timid and withdraw from the protest action. Uncle Ah-sheng, nevertheless, insists on continuing the resistance. He changes into a completely different person as he gets deeply involved in the cause:

From the moment he had allowed his actions to be dictated by his ardent love for Clear Spring, he sensed that he had changed somehow,
and he no longer considered himself a man devoid of purpose. In fact, this matter had taken on a greater importance than his own life. If he didn't do it, who would? It was as though a kind of faith had attached itself to his body and had thus become personified; somehow others too had the feeling that he was enveloped by a layer of something that shielded him from outside forces. The rustic airs that had always been with him began to fall away, and the gap between him and other people grew to vast proportions.¹²

David Worcester has categorized burlesque, the vehicle of satire, into high and low. Low burlesque, according to him, "creates a standard below its victim and makes the reader measure him against the standard", while high burlesque places "our standard, not below the victim but above him. Holding him up against a standard obviously too elevated for him will make his shortcomings stand out sharply."¹³ Hwang Chun-ming's portrayal of Uncle Ah-sheng seems to accord precisely with Worcester's definition of high burlesque:

If he conceives of himself as an exalted personage, let him be invested with the trappings and dignities of a real hero, retaining only his proper features. His pretentiousness will then stand out, to the exclusion of all other qualities. The artist ...draws us out to an unconscionable length. We seem to knock at the stars with our exalted head, until our legs, too frail to support such eminence, give way. Great then is our fall, and hugely pleasing to bystanders. It is this principle of magnification that gives us high burlesque.¹⁴
Uncle Ah-sheng's selfless devotion to his belief finally leads to his tragic death. As the last gesture of defiance, he drowns himself in the pool on the day it is completed. However, his death cannot in any way stop modernization from approaching and affecting the village, whose purity and simplicity he had tried so hard to retain. When the procession with Uncle Ah-sheng's coffin passes by the entrance to the swimming pool, the sound of laughter of some village kids playing in the pool can be clearly heard. It seems to imply that Uncle Ah-sheng's death only marks the end of the older generation and that modernization is quite welcomed by the younger generation, even in this remote village.

Although the story is primarily narrated from Uncle Ah-sheng's point of view, readers' sympathy for him is diluted by the narrator's mocking tone which dominates the whole story. The narrator seems to be a light-hearted jokester who makes fun of the hero on every possible occasion. Thus, unlike Hwang Chun-ming's other rural stories, the narrator's attitude toward modernization in this particular piece appears ambiguous. The drowning scene is depicted in such a way that readers cannot decide whether it is sad or funny and whether the narrator is sympathetic or not.
Finally he rushed crazily into the pool area and shouted at the top of his lungs: "If you're gonna take your clothes off, why don't you just go all the way, like this?" With that he stripped right in front of everyone. The young girls were so shocked they scrambled out of the pool shrieking, while the young boys laughed hilariously and applauded. Uncle Ah-sheng bent over at the waist and dove headfirst into the deep end of the pool, even though he didn't even know how to dog-paddle. When he didn't surface right away, the people who were watching no longer thought it was funny. Two girls dove in with a sense of urgency and pulled him to the surface, but they were just a moment too late—all that now remained of Uncle Ah-sheng was his name.

That Uncle Ah-sheng is not a hero in the classical sense but a humble countryfolk whose tragedy is caused by superstition and conservatism is perhaps the reason that makes the author choose to adopt a mocking tone instead of a serious one. In terms of subject matter, "The Drowning of an Old Cat" belongs to the category of Hwang's rural stories, while its burlesque nature appears to be closer to his satirical urban stories. Thus, it can be seen as a transitional piece between Hwang's rural stories and urban stories.

"The Gong" is a more serious work dealing with the conflict between a person's ideal self and actual self, a conflict which results from a person's failure to realize and cope with the change which has taken place
in society. The gong-beater in a small town named Kam Kim-ah is the protagonist of the story.\(^{13}\) Gong beating has been his profession for more than half a lifetime and he takes pride in it. Whenever there are important public announcements to make, Kam Kim-ah beats his gong up and down the streets of the town. At the beginning of the story, he has not beaten his gong for almost a year because a young man who pedals a loudspeaker-equipped pedicab has replaced him to do the job. In the eyes of Kam Kim-ah, the scene of the young man with his pedicab is not only unbearable but incongruous with the town's social fabric.

Losing his source of income, he now has to find another way to survive. Because of his old age and lack of skill, he can only join a group of loafers that usually congregate opposite a coffin shop waiting to serve at local funerals. But deep in his heart, he looks down upon those loafers and their trade. He consoles himself by thinking that this is only a temporary expedience. He is liked and respected by the loafers when he first joins them, but when his contempt of the trade is discerned, he begins to be isolated and laughed at. At Kam Kim-ah's most desperate moment, someone comes to his rescue. A person from the District Headquarters
asks him to make an announcement about paying taxes. Overwhelmed by the news, Kam Kim-ah decides to take full advantage of this rare chance. In order to produce the best result, he adds some lines of his own to the announcement. Those lines are so improper and ludicrous that he is stopped in the middle of his service by the person who hires him. In a state of confusion and panic, Kam Kim-ah breaks his gong and keeps calling out the lines in a voice tinged with madness until the voice can no longer be heard. The final scene is quite pathetic:

His voice was now quivering so badly that the words were unintelligible, although his mouth continued to move as if he were still speaking. He opened and closed it with great effort. Before long there were no more sounds, but by reading his lips, the onlookers could pretty much tell that he was saying, over and over: "I, Kam Kim-ah...I, Kam Kim-ah..."  

In the story, the image of the gong symbolizes the rise and fall of the hero. At the beginning of the story when Kam Kim-ah cannot figure out the way to deal with the unemployed situation, the gong is described as "now suddenly lay there like something that had been frightened out of its wits, resembling the vacantly opened mouth of a mute." In one of the flashbacks, we are told that the most glorious moments for both the
protagonist and his gong were the festive temple processions and excursions of the gods. On those occasions, Kam Kim-ah led the way waving his red-festooned mallet and beating his gong. The gong is broken at the end of the story when Kam Kim-ah, on the verge of madness, beats it wildly.

"The Gong" is a psychological portrayal of a self-respecting person's internal struggles which intensify when the external condition for survival becomes critical. To Kam Kim-ah, being a gong-beater means that he plays a role in society, while as a professional mourner at funerals he becomes an outcast from society. He is well aware that his only option to taking the disreputable job is hunger. But before he accepts the job, he attempts to save face by making friends with the group of loafers in order to gain their trust. When the right moment comes, he finally expresses his intention to join them with repeated emphases on the temporary nature of his membership:

"Hey, hold on a minute, all of you. I've got something I want to say. At the moment I don't have a suitable job, so for the time being I'm throwing in my lot with you. But as soon as I find a job I'll be leaving. Do you all understand? This is only temporary. I might even be leaving tomorrow. It is hard to predict since it's only temporary." He kept stressing the word "temporary."
"As long as you're willing to join up, there's no problem," Scabby Head said.
"We don't have it so bad here."
"Urn! No, I told you- it's just temporary." Kam Kim-ah shook his head forcefully, like a man who was trying to shake loose something that had stuck onto his face.
"He's right! Nobody who's got a decent job would hang around here."
"To tell you the truth, the brothers here are happy to have you along." Fire Baby was saying what all of them felt. Their smiles were warm and friendly.
"No, no, no, it's temporary. I say. When the time comes for me to leave, I don't want you to accuse me of having no feelings. I've told you that it's only temporary." He was feeling very complacent now, for he had given himself a great deal of face.19

Many episodes in the story have touched upon certain psychological subtleties adds some depth to the portrayal of the hero. Among these are the episodes in which Kam Kim-ah tries to avoid his debtors and how he attempts to do his best in the final gong-beating service and fails. Kam Kim-ah's inner world is depicted at considerable length, occasionally in the form of interior monologue. Flashbacks occur only when present scenes are reminiscent of the past. Although only a few Taiwanese idioms and terms are employed in the story, the syntax of the dialogues and monologues is to a great extent Taiwanese. Occasional use of dirty words and jokes suitably enlivens the characterization of the story.
The world view of three protagonists in the stories discussed above is not only the kind characteristic of agricultural society but also of traditional China. According to Yen Fu, the traditional Chinese world view "prized harmony, passivity, quietude, and social equilibrium." This world view is by no means adaptable to modernization and will become very likely the obstruction to progress. The general mentality of the three characters may be typified by the following lines from "The Gong":

Every once in a while a truck would roar past them down the road, causing them to reflect that there was a big world out there, one which they had no desire to belong to.

Hwang Chun-ming's rural stories tend to evince nostalgic sentiments toward agricultural society, the pre-modern world. Among the stories discussed above, "The Gong" marks the end of Hwang Chun-ming's rural stories. "Liang-ke yu-ch'i-chiang" (The Two Signpainters) (1971) is the author's first attempt to write about migrants who come from the country to the city to make a living. Although the urban experience described in this story appears peripheral, a sample of Hwang's satirical skill can be found here. The story satirizes the inhumane aspect of mass media whether it
is in the form of advertisement or television network broadcasting. The four stories written after "The Two Signpainters" deal with the issue of imperialist modernization of Taiwan society. Three of these stories will be the main focus of discussion in the following section.

The Nationalist Stance in the Urban Stories

"The Taste of Apples" is the shortest piece among the three stories chosen (the other two are "Sayonara, Goodbye" and "I Love Mary"). It is about a poor family which ironically reaps some unexpected fortune due to a car accident. Chiang Ah-fa, the head of the family, is run down and injured by a car driven by an American colonel. He becomes disabled and the whole family are drawn into a desperate situation both financially and emotionally.

To their great relief, the American colonel is willing to take full responsibility for the accident. In addition to guaranteeing that the whole family will not suffer because of Ah-fa's disability, he promises to send Ah-fa's mute daughter to a school in the United States. Overwhelmed by this good news, Ah-fa begins to
feel fortunate enough to have been hit by an American car. The most joyful moment to the family is when they have their first American-style lunch. Besides sandwiches, milk, and cola, they even enjoy the taste of apples which was a luxury they could never afford before the car accident.

Hwang Chun-ming apparently wrote this story with the intention to satirize Taiwan's economic dependence upon the United States. The story possess the potential for an allegorical reading. After the United States severed its diplomatic relationship with Taiwan in 1978, the allegorical reading seemed to be emphasized by some critics. Ch'i I-shou 蔡益壽, for instance, praised Hwang Chun-ming for his foresight. In his view, the relationship between the United States and Taiwan had turned sour just like the taste of apples described in the story:

As they took their first bites they said nothing, although they felt that they weren't quite as sweet as they had imagined; rather they were a little sour and pulpy, and when chewed they were frothy and not quite real.

The irony in this story appears suggestive and to a certain extent humorous. Toward the end of the story, Chiang Ah-fa at first angrily blames the American colonel for smashing into him. But after the colonel has
presented him twenty thousand dollars for compensation,
Ah-fa and his wife are stunned into inaction:

Twenty thousand! This nearly made their heads swim, but since the money was right there in front of them, something had to be said. But what, what should they say? All this indecision gave them both the uneasy feeling that they had done something wrong and offended someone.
The policeman, who had been standing off to one side, suddenly broke the silence:
"This has been a stroke of good luck for you," he said, "being run down by an American car. If it had been anyone else, you'd probably still be lying in the road, covered with a grass mat!"
Ah-chu bent down near Ah-fa's ear and told him what the policeman had said. Ah-fa suddenly said through tears of emotion:
"Thank you! Thank you! I'm sorry, I'm so sorry..." 

If an object of attack is one of the two essential elements of satire, the object of attack in "The Taste of Apples" is Chiang Ah-fa's mentality symbolic of the fact that the economic growth in Taiwan is achieved at the expense of its national pride. 

Unlike "The Taste of Apples", the satirical stance in "Sayonara, Goodbye" is more straightforward. The story is told from the first person point of view. The fact that the narrator shares the same last name with the author seems to imply that they are in fact the same person or the narrator is the proxy of the author.
The story relates how the narrator takes seven Japanese tourists to a brothel in his hometown for a
pleasure excursion. It is an assignment given by the general manager of the company for which the narrator is working. Although he is very unwilling to do it, he has no way to refuse it except by quitting his job which he cannot afford to do. The narrator confesses that he has strong feelings of hostility toward the Japanese because of all the brutalities that they committed against the Chinese people during World War II.

He feels as if he is playing the role of a pimp in this humiliating assignment. In the eyes of the narrator, the sense of superiority and lecherous behavior of this group of Japanese tourists are simply unbearable. The most irritating scene for him is when these Japanese businessmen throw into the air some nylon stockings for the prostitutes to fight for and they jump at the opportunity to molest the girls. The scene reminds the narrator very much of Japan's haughty posture in so-called Sino-Japanese economic and technical cooperation. He feels very uneasy about himself. On the train back to Taipei from where they stayed the night, the narrator finally siezes on a chance to embarass them by stirring up their memories of Japan's invasion of China during the Second World War. Seeing them tortured by a sense of guilt, the narrator
cannot help feeling pleased with himself.

Among all of Hwang Chun-ming's works, "Sayonara, Goodbye" is the only one narrated from the first person point of view. It seems that the author adopts the more intimate narrative perspective in order to make the narrator's attitude and opinion felt and known more directly. Besides, the first person point of view shortens not only the distance between the narrator and the reader but the circuity of the communication between the two. Since "Sayonara, Goodbye" is a work which appeals very much to the nationalistic sentiment of Chinese readers, the first person perspective thus becomes the most suitable choice which assures that the message of the story gets across effectively.

The narrator's anti-Japanese attitude in "Sayonara, Goodbye" is clearly pronounced. This explicit attitude generates different responses among its readers. The work is greeted with cheers by the readers who share the same nationalistic sentiment with the narrator. Ch'i I-shou, for example, considers the satire in this story straightforward and effective. Some critics, nevertheless, hold a different view. Lu Cheng-hui, for example, points out that the story evades the essential issues concerning the relationship between
Taiwan and Japan although it seems to satisfy some Chinese readers' psychological need for a "spiritual victory" over Japan.27

The story is generally a flashback of things which occurred within last two days. Like many of Hwang Chun-ming's story, "Sayonara, Goodbye" is not tightly knitted in the way that enables its theme to stand out. Yen Yuan-shu has observed:

Huang Chun-ming seems to be incapable of tragic intensity. For example, he could have followed the theme set up at the beginning of the story and devoted his whole story to a delineation of the conflict between economic necessity and national pride. He could have made some of the characters in the story, especially the narrator, suffer more deeply than he does in this conflict. Huang Chun-ming should be praised for his insight into social realities, but in presenting them in words he seems to have less artistry than he should have.28

The last story to be discussed is "I Love Mary". The story epitomizes a type of people in Taiwan society who blindly adulate foreigners and foreign values. The protagonist Ch'en Shun-te 陳順德 works at an American institution in Taipei. Chen has formed a habit of responding only to his English name David instead of to Chinese name. When his American boss is about to transfer back to the United States, David offers to take care of his dog Mary. Mary, a dog of a mixed breed, is
well treated in David's family because she is regarded as a symbol of David's close connection with his former boss. David's wife happens to be afraid of dogs. In order to please her husband, she has to suppress her fear and try to get along with Mary. Whenever Mary is uncooperative or creates some trouble, the poor wife is always the person to blame.

Since David believes that Mary is an American dog of fine breed, he is very concerned about the pedigree of the dog with whom Mary is going to mate. One afternoon, Mary sneaks out and mates with a dog of a mixed breed. Upon hearing what has happened to Mary from his wife, David is so furious that he harshly slaps her in the face. After realizing that she is blamed for something over which she had no control, his wife becomes calm and fearless. She asks her husband: "Do you love me? or the dog?" "The dog." her husband cries out without any hesitation.

Compared to "Sayonara, Goodbye", the theme of "I Love Mary" is better presented. In this story, Hwang Chun-ming successfully dramatizes the conflict between the protagonist's adulation for American culture and his love for his wife. The narrator suggests in the story, David's love for the dog hinges on two reasons. First of
all, as an opportunist, David wants to maintain his connection with his former boss by adopting the dog. Secondly, as an admirer of American life style, he feels proud to raise a dog whose former owner was an American. Through burlesque effect, Hwang Chun-ming in this story condemns those who try to identify themselves with western (particularly American) values during the process of modernization.

The narrative stance in the above three stories is predominantly nationalist and didactic. They were written at the time when Taiwan was suffering from diplomatic setbacks and anti-American and anti-Japanese sentiments permeates the whole intellectual circles. Nationalism is the theme emphasized not only by "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians but also by three "hsiang-t'u" writers discussed in this study.

Generally speaking, critics respond more favorably to Hwang Chun-ming's rural stories than to his urban ones. They point out that while Hwang's social concern increases in the urban stories his artistic concern decreases at the same time. Addressing this criticism, Hwang expressed his own view of art:

Whether it is artistic or not all depends upon from what perspective you see it. I say this thing is very artistic, you might not think so, and vice versa. Who is right and who is wrong?
Only the side which keeps pace with social progress is valuable. Art can be valuable only if it is helpful to the progress of the society. Otherwise, no matter how artistic it is what can it serve? 29

Moreover, he criticized his earlier works for lacking social concern. Although he stressed the social function of literature, he did not denounce literary skills all together. He was fully aware that an author's artistry is also essential to arousing readers' social consciousness. 30

In practice, Hwang Chun-ming's writing is doubtlessly benefited very much by his storytelling talent in the sense that he knows how to make a story interesting. Characterization and psychological depiction are two of the strength of his works. His obsession with storytelling, nevertheless, prevents him from becoming a succinct short story writer in the Western sense. Sometimes, he appears to be overwhelmed by his own imagination and fails to tighten his language and structure. In other words, each scene, incident, and detail of the action in his works does not necessarily contribute its share in presenting a unified theme. Episodes are often connected in terms of sequential order rather than thematical significance.
The storytelling nature of his narration may not appear as a defective characteristic in his rural stories since they are mainly tales about the past and about things that urban middle-class readers are not familiar with. Any detailed description in these stories seems interesting and attractive to their nostalgic readers. However, when Hwang Chun-ming attempts to be a satirist in his urban stories, his inability to control his imagination and linguistic style sometimes becomes an obstacle for him to aim clearly at the object of attack.

Among all the "hsiang-t'u" writers, Hwang Chun-ming is the one whose tie to traditional mentality is most felt and whose conservative attitude toward modernization is most pronounced in his works. Thus, the provincialism of "hsiang-t'u" literature is best illustrated in his works.

Hwang Chun-ming's humorous style in his satirical pieces can find its predecessors in Wu Ching-tzu (1701-1754) of the Ch'ing Dynasty or Lao She (1899-1966) of the Republican period. It is hard to decide whether it is the reflection of their personal temperament or their intention to play down the miseries of human life. Another "hsiang-t'u" writer who inherits
this legacy is Wang Chen-ho. In his works, we will no longer find genial humor but only hearty laughter.
Notes to Chapter Four

1. According to Howard Goldblatt, Hwang Chun-ming himself prefers to use the spelling of Hwang chun-ming instead of the regular Wade-Giles romanization of Huang Ch'un-ming. See the translator's preface to *The Drowning of an Old Cat and Other Stories* by Hwang Chun-ming, translated from the Chinese by Howard Goldblatt. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).

2. Here, I owe Professor Kirk Denton for this insightful remarks.


5. Kao, p. 68.


7. The lecture was given to the students of Western literatures at Cheng-chi University. See "I-ke tso-che te pei-pi hsin-ling" (The Vulgar Mentality of An Author), in the appendix to *Wo ai Ma-li* (I Love Mary), (Taipei: Yuan Ching, 1984), pp. 177-200.

8. Ibid.

9. See "T'ing, nei i-sheng 'lo"" (Listen to the Sound of That 'Gong') in *Wen-t'an* (Literary Circles), no. 252, (June, 1981), pp. 192-201.

11. Ibid., p. 17. Translation is mine.

12. *Hsiao Kua-fu*, p. 34. Translation is quoted from *The Drowning of an Old Cat*, p. 30.


15. *Hsiao Kua-fu*, p. 39; *The Drowning of an Old Cat*, p. 36.

16. Here, I follow Goldblatt's transliteration of the hero's name in Taiwanese instead of mandarin Han Chin-tsai.


18. Lo, p. 1; *The Drowning of an Old Cat*, p. 61.

19. Goldblatt's translation of the last sentence is "Since it's only temporary it's hard to make plans." To be more faithful to the original text, I change it to "It's hard to predict since it's only temporary."


22. Lo, p. 15; *The Drowning of an Old Cat*, p. 75.

23. See his "I-pa hsin-suan lei" (Those Heartsore Tears) in the preface to *Wo ai Ma-li*, p. 6.

24. The original text in *Wo ai Ma-li*, p. 103; translation is quoted from *The Drowning of an Old Cat*, p. 184.


27. See the preface to *Wo ai Ma-li*, p. 7.
28. See Lu Cheng-hui's *Hsiao-shuo yu she-hui*, (Fiction and Society), (Taipei: Lien Ching, 1988), p. 10. "Spiritual victory" is a way of self-deception that Ah Q uses as a defense when bullied in Lu Hsun's story "Ah Q cheng-chuan" (The True Story of Ah Q). Since it captures an important trait of Chinese national character, the term "Ah Q ching-shen" (The Spirit of Ah Q) later becomes a well-known allusion.


31. Ibid., p. 186.


CHAPTER V

Wang Chen-ho: A Discordant Tone in
"Hsiang-t'u" Literature

"Hsiang-t'u" literature is generally perceived as a body of literary works which speak out for the poor and the downtrodden. Thus, the tone of these works is expected to be serious and sometimes even indignant. There are indeed some "hsiang-t'u" writers whose works can perfectly meet the expectation. Wang T'o and Yang Ch'ing-ch'u are two of such writers in the case. But, can a writer who depicts the life of little people choose to use an impersonal or even ridiculing narrator despite the author's sympathetic attitude toward his characters? Wang Chen-ho's works will demonstrate to us the possibility of distancing a writer's attitude from the narrator's tone.

As a Western literature major at National Taiwan University, Wang Chen-ho (1940-1990) acquired his primary knowledge of fiction writing from his fellow
students who were also the founders and contributors of Modern Literature. Two of Wang's earlier works, "Kuei, pei-feng, jen" (Ghost, North Wind, People, 1961) and "K'uai-lo te jen" (A Happy Person, 1964) were also published in Modern Literature. Later, he became closely associated with Yu T'ien-ts'ung and Ch'en Ying-chen, the founders of Literature Quarterly. The magazine advocated realism and served as the main source of propagating "hsiang-t'u" literature from the mid-sixties through the seventies. Many of Wang Chen-ho's better-known works, such as "Lai-ch'un i pei ch'iu" (Aunt Lai-ch'un Laments Over Autumn, 1966) and "Chia-chuang i niu-ch'e" (An Oxcart for Dowry, 1967), were published in Literature Quarterly.

Being a native of Hua-lien, a coastal port in Eastern Taiwan, Wang Chen-ho draws his inspiration of characters and subject matters of his works from the early life experiences in his hometown. Small shopkeepers are typical characters in his stories. The characters' constant economic stress is often the primary factor which results in their various dilemmas in life. Wang's familiarity with Western literature seems to provide him the perspective and technique of...
presenting these raw materials.

Compared to other "hsiang-t'u" writers, he is more conscious of the question of how to present his stories in many different forms. Wang Chen-ho's experiments consist of his unconventional linguistic style and occasional insertions of illustrative elements such as photographs and musical scores. The unconventionality of his language lies not only in its heterogeneous nature but also in its arbitrary and sometimes awkward syntactical structure. Wang's adoption of Taiwanese expressions is more frequent than other "hsiang-t'u" writers. In many cases, he has to appendix explanatory notes to the end of the text for readers to understand. Besides Taiwanese, English, Japanese, and the Chinese and Taiwanese transliterations of the above two languages can all be found in the dialogues among his characters. The whimsical application of classical terms and literary expressions further complicates the heteroglossia in his works. The syntactical structure of Wang's language is characterized by the arbitrary reversal of sentence order and the verbalization of noun forms. These two features may result partly from the influence of the English language and partly from his attempt to try out the flexibility of the Chinese
language.

Another conspicuous characteristic of Wang Chen-ho's works is the device of a taunting narrator. Many readers may feel very uneasy about the prankish narrative voice in some of his stories such as "Chia-chuang i niu-ch'e" and "Liang chih lao-hu" (Two Tigers, 1975), whose protagonists are respectively a deaf and a dwarf. From the moral point of view, the deformity of such people ought not to be the object of laughter. But, when physical imperfection is associated with moral imperfection, then it is certainly the object to laugh at.

Wylie Sypher argued:

The grimace of mirth resembles the grimace of suffering; comic and tragic masks have the same distortion. Today, we know that a comic action sometimes yields tragic values.²

Many of Wang Chen-ho's characters are wearing a comic mask. Their figures and actions are distorted in a burlesque way which can bring readers laughter, sometimes hilarious and sometimes bitter. It seems to Wang that "comedy is the best way to depict sad feelings, while laughter is the best armament to fight against cruel human destiny."³
Burlesque, as David Worcester suggests, is the vehicle of satire. In his satirical pieces, such as "Hsiao Lin lai T'ai-pei" (Little Lin Comes to Taipei, 1973), "Mei-jen t'u" (The Picture of the Americanized, 1981), and "Mei-kuei mei-kuei wo ai ni" (Rose Rose I Love You, 1984), Wang has made the full use of burlesque. Through the means of puns, parodies, and exaggeration, he makes those morally despicable characters act like clowns whose behaviors are at the same time laughable and condemnable. The narrator in the first two works assumes both taunting and sympathetic voices depending on whether the morality of the character under depiction is desirable or not. In the third work, however, the taunting voice dominates throughout the whole story and the burlesque effect is more complete.

Except satirical pieces, most of Wang Chen-ho's works fall into the category of realism, a mimesis of certain situations in life. These situations may not be dramatic in nature, they are however the most tangible reality to the characters in the stories. Wang Chen-ho does not dwell so much on telling interesting stories as Hwang Ch'un-ming does. Rather, he spends much effort on depicting some trivial details in day-to-day life. The
detailed description of his stories creates not only a true-life effect but also a sense of inescapable triviality of human beings. The narrative voice in these stories usually maintain a neutral tone. "Lai-ch'un i pei ch'iu", "Wu-yueh shih-san chieh" (The Festival on the Thirteenth of May, 1967), "Chi-mo hung" (Lonely Redness), and several others belong to this category.

The following discussion will concentrate on five of Wang's works published during the mid-sixties through the seventies when "hsiang-t'u" literature was at its peak. Some other stories may be briefly mentioned only for the sake of comparison and contrast. These five stories can be divided into three groups according to the nature of their narrative voices. The first group represented by "Lai-ch'un i pei ch'iu" has a neutral narrator. The second group characterized by its taunting narrator includes "Chia-chuang i niu-ch'e" and "San ch'un chi" (A Tale of Three Marriages, 1968). The narrative voice in the third group shifts between mocking tone and sympathetic tone. "Hsiao Lin lai T'ai-pei" and "Shang-ke-li-la" (Shangrila, 1979) are the two stories in the third group.
"Aunt Lai-ch'un Laments Over Autumn"

"Aunt Lai-ch'un Laments Over Autumn" depicts an old widow Aunt Lai-ch'un's sad feeling about being forced to separate from a long-time company, Uncle Ah-teng, a widower whom she has never married but with whom she has lived for almost twenty-six years. The reason which leads to the separation of this old couple is an economic one. Being an extra dependent in the family of Aunt Lai-ch'un's son, Uncle Ah-teng is asked to leave by Lai-ch'un's daughter-in-law when the family's economic situation tightens up. Although Uncle Ah-teng is unwilling to separate from Aunt Lai-ch'un, he finally decides to maintain his self-respect by leaving for his adopted son's house during Aunt Lai-ch'un's sickness. The story ends with Aunt Lai-ch'un's lingering thought about Uncle Ah-teng in her sleepless autumnal nights.

The title of "Lai-ch'un i pei ch'iu" itself is composed by two incongruous elements. Lai-ch'un, an ordinary Taiwanese female name, literally means Coming-Spring. "Pei ch'iu", meaning "lamenting over autumn", is a classical allusion which appeared in traditional Chinese poetry and was mainly associated with literati. On the literal level, "spring" and "autumn" form a
seasonal opposition, while the subject "Aunt Lai-ch'\un" and the act of "lamenting over autumn" constitute an incompatible correlation on the connotative level. The word "autumn" not only indicates the time when the story takes place but also symbolizes the desolate situation of the couple, Aunt Lai-ch'un and Uncle Ah-teng in their old age.

Wang Chen-ho adopts fade-in and fade-out techniques to narrate this story. The narrator begins the story with the description of a desolate autumnal scene which also applies to portray Aunt Lai-ch'un's state of mind. The focus of the narration then gradually shifts to Aunt Lai-ch'un's daily life and then her relationship with other characters. The affection between Aunt Lai-ch'un and Uncle Ah-teng is revealed through their brief but suggestive dialogues. There are many silent moments between them which indicate their mutual understanding as well as their helplessness. The focus of narration gradually leaves other characters and returns to Aunt Lai-ch'un's inner thought. The narrator finally ends the story with the description of the late autumn atmosphere, which also suggests Aunt Lai-ch'un's inextricable loneliness.
Although the story is mainly narrated from Aunt Lai-ch'un's point of view, the narrator's attitude toward her is not completely sympathetic. She is portrayed as an intolerant grandmother who vents her anger on her little granddaughter and also as an inconsiderate mother who insists on having prodigal offerings for god-worshiping occasions despite her son's heavy financial burden. Her daughter-in-law is indeed shrewd and unfilial but is certainly not the only person to blame in their conflicts.

Unlike some of his later works, Wang Chen-ho does not attempt to use many Taiwanese colloquial expressions in the dialogical part of this story. In terms of the nature of the speech, the narrator in this story appears close to the author himself, a person with considerable literary training. The various speeches of the characters in this story may be a close simulation of their age, sex, and personality but do not reflect much of their regional origin. If Wang had chosen to use more Taiwanese colloquial expressions in the dialogical part of this story, the shift from the narrator's speech to the characters' speeches would have been too abrupt and too incoherent. This may explain why in his later works in which he adopts more Taiwanese colloquial
expressions he has to resort to a taunting narrator whose speech is intended to be different from his own.

"An Oxcart for Dowry"

Among Wang Chen-ho's works, "An Oxcart for Dowry" is the most talked-about piece. To some critics, the well-knit plot, the grotesque characters, and the idiosyncratic language of this story are all inviting topics for discussion. For many readers, nevertheless, the taunting narrative voice in this story makes them feel uncomfortable and confused about the author's attitude toward the wretched protagonist Wan-fa 烏發 .

The story is about how a poverty-stricken oxcart driver Wan-fa becomes a cuckold and how he then tacitly consents to share his wife with the adulterer in exchange for some financial benefits. The compensation he gets from his adversary is an oxcart which he has long dreamed of owning. Symbolically, the oxcart becomes the "dowry" he obtains by "remarrying" his wife to her lover.5

The story is presented in a grotesque manner. Its background setting is a little hut located outside a village and close to a graveyard. Three main characters
in this story are all portrayed by their undesirable characteristics. Wan-fa, the cuckolded husband, is deaf and impotent. His deafness is certainly a disadvantage when competing with his opponent in the love triangle. It, however, becomes an advantage when he needs to protect himself from hearing the villagers' gibes. The world seen through Wan-fa's eyes is full of absurdity and ludicrousness:

No sooner had he taken a seat than the manager (of the restaurant) rushed over to welcome him with a flood of courteous words, none of which quite reached Wan-fa's ears. No, not even a single polite word. It was like watching a silent film: Wan-fa saw only the two dry lips of the manager making the open-and-shut motion over and over, with no notion of what was being said. Sometimes the man's mouth moved so slowly he seemed to be yawning; again so rapidly that it was like a hungry dog gnawing at a meatless bone. These incessant lip movements made the manager ridiculous in Wan-fa's eyes.

Wan-fa's wife Ah-hao, an ugly woman and gambling addict who sells off her three daughters in order to repay her debt. Her ugliness is described by gossipy villagers as:

She weighs no more than four ounces, but has a yap big as a toilet bowl. And a chest like a washboard! It must be painful to press one's chest against it.
Ah-hao's lover Chien 閔, a clothing peddler, is characterized by his strong armpit odor. He scratches his armpits again and again "as if whole families of ringworms had rented the place and falled years behind in their payments, and he was determined to throw them out." Since he is from Lu-kang 噹港, he talks with heavy nasal sounds as if he had a bad cold.

The three characters are depicted like clowns and their love triangle is like a joke. The names of Wan-fa and Ah-hao also help to add certain ironical effect to the story. Wan-fa, whose name literally means "boundless prosperities", "has always been troubled by money matters". Wan-fa's living condition does not get improved at all after he has married Ah-hao, whose name literally means "Goodness". As for the third party Chien, his name clearly pronounces the role he plays in the story since it is the homophone of "kan" in Taiwanese, the word for "to debauch".

In order to create the burlesque effect, Wang Chen-ho intentionally chooses to use an awkward and unconventional language to narrate the story. In addition to the adoption of Taiwanese colloquial expressions and idioms in the dialogues among characters, the unconventionality of Wang's language
lies largely in its vocabulary and syntactical structure. Rarely-used literary expressions are occasionally inserted in the generally vernacular narration. Compounds such as "huan-ts'ung" (joy), "p'iao-o" (extreme hunger) are hardly ever seen in other writers' works and possibly Wang Chen-ho's own creation. The syntactical structure of "An Oxcart for Dowry" is casual and experimental in the aspects such as the interchange among different parts of speech and the reversal of the regular order of certain parts of speech. In the sentence "... Wan-fa jing tzu-fen han hsing Chien ti i p'eng-yu te fei-ch'ang le..." (Wan-fa began to think that he was already on friendly terms with Chien), a common noun "p'eng-yu" is used as an adjective and the regular order that the adverb "fei-ch'ang" is followed by an adjective is reversed. Similar examples can be found in many other sentences in this story.

The author also resorts to many similes to make the narrative voice sound funny and ridiculing. One of the instances appears when Wan-fan catches his wife and her lover in the act of adultery:

With a sharp, cutting "What are you doing there?" Wan-fa came up to them, both his hands made into fists. Like efficient recruits obeying a command, both Ah-hao and Chien stood up in a
split second. They spoke in the same breath, each trying to speak louder and faster than the other, as if it were a recitation contest between grade school students.¹⁰

Henri Bergson claims, "A comic effect is always obtainable by transposing the natural expression of an idea into another key."¹¹ Wang Chen-ho here create a laughable scene by comparing Ah-hao and Chien's reaction to Wan-fa's question to recruits' reaction to a command and by comparing the way they try to answer as fast as possible to the way grade school students perform in the recitation contest. The comic effect of these similes might be diluted in the process of translation. Bergson has observed:

The former (the comic expressed by language) could, if necessary, be translated from one language into another, though at the cost of losing the greater portion of its significance when introduced into a fresh society different in manners, in literature, and above all in association of ideas.¹²
Most similes used in this story as well as in Wang's other stories are vivid imageries appealing particularly to those who are familiar with the experiences that the imageries refer to. Similes are the means by which Wang Chen-ho demonstrates his wits and humor. They become the great source of the comic effect of his works. "A Story of Three Marriages" is another example in which Wang Chen-ho uses humorous similes to make the narrative voice prankish and funny.

"The Tale of Three Marriages"

The original title "San ch'un chi" bears some resemblance to those of some classical stories such as "Chen chung chi" and "Han-tan chi". Unlike those two stories, this story is not a legendary tale of any sort but a comedy about an ordinary woman's third marriage.

The protagonist Ah-chiao, a woman in her forties, has had two marriages before she meets her third husband Mr. Ch'u, a widower in his fifties. The story is mainly about how Ah-chiao gets to know Mr. Ch'u in an arranged meeting and how later Ah-chiao becomes a dominant wife who controls both the economic power in
The family and the life of her henpecked husband.

The whole story can be seen as a parody of traditional love stories about talented scholars and beautiful ladies. The heroine Ah-chiao, although not as ugly as Ah-hao in "An Oxcart for Dowry", is neither young nor attractive. She is afflicted with varicose veins which look like many entangled green snakes. Morally, she is also characterized by cunningness, greediness, and ferocity. In the face of her illiteracy and unreason, Mr. Ch'u, a fairly educated person, can do nothing but give in.

Mr. Ch'u is not portrayed in a much better light than his wife. He suffers from chronic constipation. In Ah-chiao's eyes, Mr. Ch'u's most contemptible weakness is his impotence. He is impotent not only physically but also morally. He is not courageous enough to defend his son and daughter-in-law even if he knows that they are victims of Ah-chiao's conspiracy.

In addition to these two comic figures, some laughable episodes in the story are transposed into serious analogies to achieve burlesque effect. One instance is found when Mr. Ch'u and Ah-chiao first meets at a restaurant. A cooked shrimp with catchup slips off Mr. Ch'u's chopsticks and drops right onto the middle
of Ah-chiao's chest. The author compares the stained red spots on Ah-chiao's bosom to the bleeding wound shot by Mr. Ch'u's arrow of love. Another instance appears when Mr. Ch'u just recovers from temporary muteness. He talks uninterruptedly for fear that he might lose his voice again. He acts as if he were trying to make up for the last one month during which he was unable to talk. Here, Wang Chen-ho compares Mr. Ch'u's situation to a student who has played whole summer and tries to get the calligraphy assignment done within one day right before registration. This analogy perhaps can only be appreciated by students in Taiwan who has had the experience of burning the midnight oil to finish what ought to be done for the summer vacation in order to be permitted to register for new school year.

The awkwardness and whimsicality of Wang's language in "An Oxcart for Dowry" seem to decrease to a great extent in "The Tale of Three Marriages". Although the narrative voice remains prankish, the linguistic style of this story appears relatively lucid and smooth and is in the fashion often seen in some vernacular novels of the Ch'ing Dynasty. Wang Chen-ho admits that the tone and the rhythm of this story have been inspired by the serial novel *Hsing shih yin-yuan* 醒世姻缘 (A Marriage
to Awaken the World). The syntax of some sentences in "The Tale of Three Marriages" is strikingly similar to what is found in some vernacular novels of the Ch'ing Dynasty. For instance, a sentence reads, "Ju-chin ch'ih kung-chia ti liang, ling kung-chia ti hsiang, shen-fen tzu-shih fei i-ch'ien k'o-i pi-ni." Nowadays, she is a government employee and enjoys a status quite different from the past.) The imitation of the linguistic style of a pre-modern novel makes the effect of parody and mockery in this story more complete.

In the following two stories, the narrative voice shifts between the taunting tone and the sympathetic tone depending on whether or not the moral traits of the character in question are desirable.

"Little Lin Comes to Taipei"

"Little Lin Comes to Taipei" is Wang Chen-ho's first piece attempting to satirize some urban Chinese in Taiwan who unashamedly adulate American culture and values. The story is depicted primarily through the eyes of Little Lin, a country boy who works in an airline company in Taipei. From what Little Lin sees and hears
within one day in the company, we are informed the way those staff members talk, act, and believe. Except Old Chang, other staff members in the company are portrayed as adulators of American culture. Their adulation is exemplified in ways such as the adoption of English names, conscious insertion of English in their talks, and constant boast of being Americanized. They are so anxious to identify with American culture and values that they seem always ready to abandon their Chinese identity. One of the staff members, for instance, even deliberately plans to deliver her baby in America in order to get citizenship for her child and permanent residence for herself.

Compared to the rest of staff members, Old Chang is in a disadvantageous position since he does not know English. On the one hand, his inability to speak English prevents him from getting promotion and frequent pay raises. But on the other hand, it saves him from sharing the same mentality with his colleagues. The contrast between Old Chang and other staff members is also distinct financially. A staff member named T. P. Ku spends five hundred NT dollars for a cup of coffee, while Old Chang lives in a shabby condition.

The contrast between Little Lin and those staff members is the one not only between the rural and the
urban but also between desirable moral qualities and undesirable ones. In this story, the rural are associated with desirable qualities such as filiality, thrift and compassion, while the urban are equated with undesirable qualities such as extravagance, snobbishness, and apathy. This story dwells particularly on the contrast between the compassionate and the apathetic. For example, upon hearing the news that Old Chang's sick daughter is in serious condition, Little Lin cannot help bursting into tears while other staff members are indifferent to it and even blame him for making a great fuss about trifles.

Wang Chen-ho appeals to two devices to poke fun at those staff members who are morally condemnable. One device is to play with words. He intentionally uses phrases with close sounds but bad connotation to transliterate their English names. "Dorothy", for instance, becomes "Tao la-chi" (dumping garbage); and "Douglas" becomes "Tao-kuo-lai la-shih" (to shit upside down). These transliterations appear natural and laughable because they are heard by Little Lin, a person who does not know any English. The other device the author uses is hostile similes. As he depicts, the manager K. C. Jen smokes a
cigar "similar to an erected penis" and Douglas, the head of reservation section, laughs in a way "as if he really wanted to shit upside down".

What Wang Chen-ho demonstrates here is, in Freud's term, "tendentious wit". Among the four kinds of tendentious wit discerned by Freud: obscene, hostile, cynical, and sceptical, Wang apparently resorts to the first two kinds. Morton Gurewitch points out:

The pleasures accruing from tendentious wit, on the other hand, are intense, for this kind of wit is a verbal harvest of repressed drives. The tendentious wit maker releases inhibitory psychic energy; as a result, his detonations of the unconscious destroy civilized surveillance, if only momentarily. By evacuating the painful ethic of good breeding and correct form, tendentious wit indirectly restores primary joys (those delights that education and virtue oblige us to renounce).

Wang seems to acquire certain pleasure by teasing the characters whom he condemns in a way that he is not allowed to do through means other than fiction writing. His tendentious wit is more elaborately and extensively developed in the later satirical pieces "The Picture of the Americanized" (an extended version of "Little Lin Comes to Taipei") and "Rose Rose I Love You".

In "Little Lin Comes to Taipei", the taunting voice dominates the most part of the narration. The
sympathetic tone is found only in the part which depicts the distressful situation facing Old Chang's family. In the next story to be discussed "Shangrila", the sympathetic voice will take over the major portion of the narration, while the taunting voice is only disperse in between.

"Shangrila"

"Shangrila" tells a story about how a widow endures various insults and hostilities in order to help her only son prepare for the high school entrance examination. Ah-tuan 阿艶, the widow, has been considered as a jinx by her neighbors. Although she tries to behave discreetly to avoid their sarcastic remarks, she is frequently the victim of their hostility. Like most poor parents, Ah-tuan hopes that her son can be better educated and have a brighter future. The entrance examination thus means a great deal to the mother and the son. We are not told whether or not the son eventually passes the examination but there seems to be a sign of hope lurking at the end of the story.
"Shangrila" here does not refer to the hidden paradise in James Hilton's novel Lost Horizon but rather a popular song in Taiwan in the seventies. The recording of the song coming out from a pedicab is overheard twice by the protagonist when she is walking on the street. The first time occurs when she sees her son returning home from the examination, while the second time when her brother takes her son to his teacher's house to find out the answer to a question which is very likely to appear on the next day examination. These two scenes can be seen as an intrusion of the detailed description of the protagonist's deep concern about her son's entrance examination. In other words, they serve as a digression from the immediate concern of the main characters. The title of the song "Shangrila" seems to symbolize the protagonist's vision of the future when her son passes the examination and her sacrifices pay off.

In Taiwan, entrance examinations determine a student's academic career to a great extent. And a good academic career often promises a better future after graduation. Thus, a student's performance in the entrance examination becomes the focus of his or her parents' attention and an important factor which affects
their ordinary life. In "Shangrila", Wang Chen-ho successfully depicts a widow's anticipation and anxiety which revolve about her only son's examination. Through certain deliberate employment of imageries, we sense the mother's perception and expectation of her son. The following passage provides only one of the examples:

Raising his head, he looked at his mother. Then, he looked toward the doorway as if he were giving her some time to think it over. At the same moment, he was facing the afternoon sun which shone through the doorway. It was around the end of April and the beginning of May, the time when Hua-lien has the most moderate and comfortable climate. Even the setting sun was in radiant red and appeared particularly beautiful. It shone in Hsiao-ch'uan's small good-looking face and made the face look as if it were plated with a layer of gold. The whole scene was like the statue of the fair boy in the temple suddenly standing right before one's eyes.17

The imagery of "the statue of the fair boy in the temple" should be taken not only as the portrayal of Hsiao-ch'uan at that particular moment but also as the image seen through his mother's eyes. Her son is the only person who can make her feel her hardship and suffering worthwhile. In his mother's mind, he is certainly as precious as the sacred figure that she worships in the temple.

The narrator in this story shifts between two different tones, one sympathetic and the other
ridiculing. In the description of the widow and her son, the narrative voice is serious and free from any trace of mockery. The widow is portrayed as a dedicated and virtuous mother but appears somewhat timid in face of her neighbors' criticisms. The son is characterized as a studious student and an understanding child but also as having certain traits of naivete of his age. As for the depiction of those morally condemnable characters, the narrative voice is rather taunting. For instance, Mr. Chang's "two rows of yellowish teeth were so far apart that one could even throw a ball into the space" when he smiled whereas Mrs. Chang is portrayed as being "so advanced in evolutionary procedure that her neck disappeared".

The language used in this story is different from Wang Chen-ho's other stories in its adoption of Taiwanese third person pronoun "i" 伊 (she) instead of "t'a" 她 (she) in Mandarin Chinese to refer to the female protagonist. The use of "i" has produced an effect of reminding the reader of the protagonist's regional origin and humble background. In the main, Wang Chen-ho does not attempt to incorporate in this story too many rarely-used expressions, whether Taiwanese or Mandarin. Unlike the stories written prior to this one,
the author gives immediate Mandarin equivalents in the parentheses right after those Taiwanese idioms instead of putting them in the notes after the whole text. In one place, he makes an abrupt shift from Taiwanese to a rare expression in Mandarin "jao-shih-che-pan" 類是這般 (even though (she behaved) in this manner), he simply resorts to the phrase "to say it in Mandarin" to alleviate the abruptness. All these instances seem to indicate the author's intention to make his language less awkward and more readable.

As shown in the above five stories, the two distinct features of Wang Chen-ho's writing are the comic effect and the unconventional linguistic style. These two features may be seen as the product derived from his philosophy of life and fiction writing respectively.

"Perhaps I have seen too many sad things," he once declared, "I always hope, whenever possible, to bring more laughters to the world, even a very small one will also be helpful." It is based on this view of life, Wang Chen-ho creates burlesque effect in many of his stories. Taunting narrators, deformed characters, and exaggerated similes are frequently his means to produce comic effect.
As a matter of fact, the underlying meaning of comedy goes beyond bringing laughters itself. George Meredith sees comedy as a game dealing with human nature in the drawing room "where we have no dust of the struggling outer world, no mire, no violent crashes." Morton Gurewitch derives from Freud's theory of arts and considers the art of comedy as "the symbolic overthrow of moral restraint or social power". He argues:

The arts, Freud himself tells us in Civilization and Its Discontents, are among the "palliative remedies" we utilize to cope with excessive disillusion and suffering. And since the "substitute gratifications" supplied by the arts allow us, to some extent, to escape from the oppressions of reality, the reader of Freud may easily conclude that the art of comedy must be especially capable, by virtue of its frequent levity and irreverence, of temporarily nullifying the authority of the superego, which, as Freud indicates, exhausts us with feelings of guilt. For this reason it becomes almost irresistible to derive the satisfactions of comedy from the discontents of civilization, especially those discontents produced by legality and morality.

Toward fiction writing, Wang follows Hemingway's lead in believing that to engage in writing a piece of work is always a new beginning and new challenge to a writer. A writer should constantly, in his opinion, attempt to break through previous works. Wang's language has particularly demonstrated his earnest
intention to be original and unprecedented. The unconventional syntactical structure; the arbitrary mixture of classical written language with contemporary spoken language; and the daring incorporation of different dialects and languages are the major elements which constitute his unique linguistic style. The eccentricity and iconoclasm of the language used in "An Oxcart for Dowry" is comparable to Wang Wen-hsing's language in his modernist work "A Crisis in the Family". Thus, as Wang Chen-ho's case shows, the opposition between modernism and realism appears insignificant in terms of language.

Wang Chen-ho's comic approach to the materials which could be otherwise solemnly treated is also an experimental effort itself. It provides a different aspect of Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature which is generally characterized by its "heavy moralizings". In a broader context, as Wang Te-wei 王德威 pointed out, Wang Chen-ho inherits Lao She's legacy of humor and mockery which offers an alternative voice in modern Chinese fiction predominated by the tone of "indignant outcries and poignant passion".22

Compared to other "hsiang-t'u" writer, Wang Chen-ho is more conscious of the arts of fiction and more eager
to experiment with different forms and techniques. In this aspect, he is close to modernist writers, or rather, he is much influenced by modernist writings. The subject matter and the generally realistic nature of his works, however, put him back on the firm ground of a "hsiang-t'u" writer. Wang Chen-ho's case shows us the fact that Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies was not a sealed entity immune from any Western influence as some of its theoreticians might have believed.

The theory of "hsiang-t'u" literature will be tested again in the next chapter against the works of one of its major theoreticians, Ch'en Ying-chen. Since Ch'en fell under the influence of Western modernism in the early stage of his writing career, his case is more complex and more fascinating in terms of the dialectic relationship between modernism and realism.
Notes to Chapter Five


3. Lin, Ch'ing-hsuan. "Hsi-jou yu hsi-ku-t'ou" (The Meat of the Play and the Bone of the Play) in the appendix to Mei-ien t'u (The Picture of the Americanized), (Taipei: Hung Fan, 1982).


5. As a matter of fact, Wang Chen-ho uses the term "chia-chuang" (dowry) in the sense of "pin-chin" (the money paid to the parents of the prospective bride).

6. See An Oxcart for Dowry, p. 72; translation quoted from Chinese Stories from Taiwan: 1960-1970, p. 76. The story was translated by the author and Jon Jackson.

7. An Oxcart for Dowry, p. 80; Chinese Stories from Taiwan, p. 83.

8. An Oxcart for Dowry, p. 77; translation quoted from Cyril Birch's "Images of Suffering in Taiwan Fiction" in Chinese Fiction from Taiwan, p. 81.


10. An Oxcart for Dowry, p. 84; Chinese Stories from Taiwan, p. 87.

11. Comedy, p. 140.

12. Ibid., p. 127.

13. See Note 9.


17. _Shangrila_, p. 198.


21. See Note 18.

CHAPTER VI

Ch'en Ying-chen: Theory versus Practice

Among the three "hsiang-t'ü" writers discussed in this study, Ch'en Ying-chen (1937–) is the only one who also assumes the role of political and literary theoretician. Like Hwang Chun-ming, Ch'en Ying-chen's works can be categorized into two periods. Ch'en Ying-chen's earlier works demonstrate traits of romanticism which contradicts the general definition of "hsiang-t'ü" literature as a realist literary trend. His later works, however, shifts to realism. As Ch'en Ying-chen's literary style changes, the narrative stance in his works also changes from romantic to didactic.

Ch'en Ying-chen, the pen name of Ch'en Yung-shan, was born in Chu-nan in 1937. Ch'en Ying-chen was in fact the name of his twin brother who died at the age of nine. In 1961, he graduated from the Department of Western Literature at Tamkang College (now became Tamkang University). Since the sixties, Ch'en
has been playing an active role among Taiwan intellectuals. His publication includes not only works of fiction but also polemical essays concerning social and political issues. The main core of his political views is constituted by the creeds of nationalism and anti-capitalism.

Ch'en Ying-chen's earlier works (1959-1965) are characterized by a kind of obsessive melancholic sentimentalism. Some of the protagonists found in these stories are idealistic youth who nevertheless feel impotent to act. They demonstrate the trait of individualism and existential anxiety which are more or less influenced by Western modernism. "Wo te ti-ti Kang-hsiung" (My Younger Brother Kang-hsiung, 1960); and "Hsiang-ts'un te chiao-shih" (The Country Village Teacher, 1960) are typical examples. Another noteworthy subject matter from this period is about the relationship between mailanders and native Taiwanese particularly in terms of love and marriage. Without any exception, the relationship is doomed to a tragic end. Stories such as "Chiang-chun tsu" (A Couple of Generals, 1964) and "I lu-se chih hou-niao" (A Green Migratory Bird, 1964) belong to this category. This subject matter is
occasionally touched upon in Ch'en Ying-chen's later works, although it is no longer the major theme of the stories and the outcome of the relationship turns optimistic.

There is a transitional period between Chen Ying-chen's earlier works and later works. The period covers only two years of his writing career, which are 1966 and 1967. Works produced in this period are stylistically different from those in the previous period. The difference is depicted by Ch'en Ying-chen himself as "Emotional instigation has been replaced by rational vision; provocative and romantic expressions have been replaced by serene and realistic analyses." "Tsui-hou te hsia jih" 最後的夏日 (The Last day of Summer, 1966); "T'ang Ch'ien te hsi-chu" 唐僧的喜劇 (The Comedy of Narcissa T'ang, 1967); and "Ti-i chien ch'ai-shih" 第一件差事 (My First Case, 1967) are the pieces from this period.

There was a seven-year interval (1967-1973) during which Ch'en Ying-chen served his jail term on a charge of "subversive activities". Five years after his release, he resumed his role as a fiction writer and then began to launch into a more ambitious project called "Hua-sheng-tun ta-lou hsi-lich" 華盛頓大樓系列
(Washington Building Series). The series include four stories which examine how people's values and relationships become distorted when they work in transnational corporations, a symbol of far-reaching global capitalism. The four stories in the series are "Yeh hsing huo-ch'e" 夜行貨車 (Night Freight, 1978); "Shang-pan tsu te i-jih" 上班族的一日 (One Day in the Life of a White-Collar Worker, 1978); Yun 雲 (Clouds, 1980); and "Wan shang ti-chun" 萬商帝君 (The All-incorporating Business God, 1982). The Washington Building Series are Ch'en Ying-chen's first systematic effort to contain his socio-political-economic messages in the works of fiction. After the series, he continued to write some stories about certain tragic events which took place in the fifties, a time of prevalent political purges and horrors. Stories such as "Ling-tang hua" 鈴-花 (Bell-Flower, 1983) and "Shan-lu" 山路 (The Mountain Path, 1984) are two examples.

In this chapter, I shall look mainly at the change in the narrative stance from his earlier works to his later ones. The Washington Building Series are indispensable pieces to demonstrate the narrative stance in Ch'en Ying-chen's later works, although two of the works in the series were written a bit later than the
time period (from the mid-sixties through the seventies) that this study primarily covers. In addition to the series, two other stories, "The Country Village Teacher" and "A Couple of Generals", will also be discussed. These two stories represent not only the author's earlier writing style but also two important themes which, I believe, are essential to the understanding of Ch'en Ying-chen's political thought and dilemma. "The Country Village Teacher" deals with the feeling of "spiritual impotence" of a Taiwanese political intellectual, while "A Couple of Generals" tackles the possibility of an intimate relationship between mainlanders and native Taiwanese in Taiwan society. 

The Feeling of "Spiritual Impotence" of an Intellectual

Unlike other "hsiang-t'u" writers, Ch'en Ying-chen seems to be more concerned about the life and fate of intellectuals rather than people from lower social strata. Although few stories such as "A Couple of Generals" do deal with characters with humble background, poverty and hardships in their life have never become the focus of Ch'en's depiction. On the contrary, poverty is treated as a shadow which
constantly accompany the presence of his idealistic intellectual protagonists in many of his earlier works. To a certain extent, poverty turns into an ingredient of romanticism instead of realism since these stories dwell more on characters' conflicts and struggles between idealism and reality than any other aspects. "The Country Village Teacher" is one distinctive example to illustrate this point.

The story describes how a young fanciful political reformer becomes disillusioned then deteriorates and finally ends his life by committing suicide. The protagonist Wu Chin-hsiang is a survivor of the Second World War. Soon after he returns from the war front in Borneo, he is offered a teaching position in his hometown, a mountain village.

Like many Taiwanese intellectuals at that time, Wu feels the intimate sense of national blood ties with China and believes that the end of the war will give China a chance for reform. His disillusionment nevertheless comes when on the one hand the bloody conflicts between mainlanders and native Taiwanese occur in Taiwan and on the other hand the civil war between the Chinese Nationalists and the Communists takes place on the mainland. All of Wu's terrifying memories of
the war begin to haunt him when one of his students is drafted to join the army. Being unable to deal with the horror that these memories have brought him, Wu cannot but choose killing himself as his only way out.

The story is narrated in an obscure and "reflective" style. The reflective nature of the narration may have something to do with the personality of the protagonist. Since the protagonist is a person who has ideals only in reveries but never takes action, the major part of the story dwells on what he observes and ponders. Dialogues appear briefly between lengthy descriptions of the hero's inner thought.

The obscure style of the narration may be attributed to certain politically sensitive elements in the story. A reader without sufficient social and historical background knowledge could be confused about sentences like "The next year at the beginning of spring, the upheaval within Taiwan and the turmoil on the mainland spread to Wu's isolated mountain village." "The upheaval within Taiwan" refers to the violent conflicts between the mainlander-dominant government and native Taiwanese around 1947. In order to relax the tension between these two major ethnic groups in Taiwan, the mention of these conflicts has later become a political
taboo since the Nationalist government's retreat to Taiwan in 1949. Thus, Ch'en Ying-chen intentionally describes the conflicts in an abstract sense without touching upon any concrete detail. Other politically sensitive elements, such as the fact that the protagonist is a socialist who hopes for a reformed unified China and resents any warfare especially the Chinese civil war, are handled vaguely and suggestively to evade censorship.

The story tells us things not only about Wu Chinh-hsiang but also, to a certain extent, about Ch'en Ying-chen. The protagonist's political ideal as well as his feeling of "spiritual impotence" is also shared by the author himself. Many of Ch'en Ying-chen's polemical essays have revealed his socialist tendency in terms of the perception of history and society. Moreover, he admits that he did once feel hope for the socialist society on the mainland.10

Living in a capitalist society like Taiwan, Ch'en feels impotent to act. In a self-critical article entitled "Shih lun Ch'en Ying-chen" (A Tentative Comment on Ch'en Ying-chen), he sees himself as a petty bourgeois intellectual who often fails to reconcile the contradiction between what he
thinks and what he acts. The middle social footing of a petty bourgeois intellectual, according to Ch'en, prevents him not only from severing the ties to the upper class who try to maintain the established order, but also from completely identifying with the lower social strata who hope to improve the existent establishment. It is this dilemma that confronts both the protagonist of "The Country Village Teacher" and Ch'en Ying-chen himself and makes them feel impotent to act.

In addition to Ch'en's explanation of petty bourgeois intellectuals' common dilemma, there is yet one important factor which helps increase the gap between their (if not everyone of them, at least the kind that Wu Chin-hsiang and Ch'en Ying-chen stand for) thought and action to start with. The factor can be summed up as the unrealistic romanticism. One scene in the story of "The Country Village Teacher" may illustrate this point:

When school opened, Wu Chin-hsiang stood looking at the swarthy faces of his seventeen students. He was moved in a way he could not explain. He loved them for being young and uncouth, and because they were tattered and filthy. Perhaps this kind of feeling was not limited to love alone. He was so touched that he felt in himself a reverence for these little children, farmers' sons and daughters. He smiled at them, and simply did not know how to communicate his intense zeal.
Wu's romanticization of the poor rural children, however, soon faces the challenge of the cold reality.

Yet at that moment, standing before this flock of unresponsive children with their wooden stares, he realized there was no way he could use their language to communicate his good intentions and his sincerity. He tried gestures, and several times moistened his lips with his tongue searching for the appropriate analogy and phrase. He even went so far to step down from the lecture platform. He spoke to them in gentle tones, his eyes shining brilliantly, but the students fidgeted in their seats and were as unreceptive as ever.\[13\]

What we see here is a picture of an intellectual who is overwhelmed by his own enthusiasm but unable to relate himself to the subject whom he is so eager to serve. The fact that "he could not use their language to communicate his good intentions and his sincerity" indicates that he is by no means realistic in terms of educating these ignorant children. And this unreality of attitude mainly results from his failure to see the true essence of things from the very beginning.

Ch'en Ying-chen's romanticism is quite pronounced in his earlier works. In addition to his romantic characters, the frequent occurrence of death and suicide is also a manifestation of Ch'en romanticism. Besides "The Country Village Teacher", stories such as "My Younger Brother Kang-hsiung", "A Couple of Generals", and "My First
Case" can be all linked together by their suicidal theme. Among these stories, the suicide in "A Couple of Generals" appears particularly fatalistic and perhaps incomprehensible to some readers.14

The Doomed Relationship

As mentioned before, among Ch'en Ying-chen's earlier works, there is a series of stories which deal with the intimate relationship between mainlander Chinese and native Taiwanese. "A Couple of Generals" is perhaps the most impressive one in this series in terms of its characterization and unexpected ending. The two main characters of the story are only identified by their nicknames which portray their distinctive physical features. The male protagonist "Three Corners", a mainlander Chinese, is a retired soldier. The female protagonist "Little Skinny Maid" is a Taiwanese country girl who was once sold to a brothel and escaped. They are both members of a musical troupe when they first meet. Although there is friendship between them, their relationship is never romantic.

A dramatic turn takes place when "Little Skinny Maid" is in need of a great sum of money to repay her
debt. Without expecting her to pay him back, "Three Corners" leaves her all his retirement money and then leaves the troupe. Her gratitude makes her feel determined to find him and become his wife. When they meet each other again, she has gone through the shameful experience of prostitution and he has aged considerably in his appearance. Both of them feel that they are no longer pure enough to consummate their love in this life. They finally commit suicide hoping to start with a clean slate in the next life.

The ending of this story is quite abrupt not only because readers are not prepared for it in the course of the development but also because it has traces of the imposition of the author's romantic perception. It seems that the two protagonists have become perfectionists all of a sudden. In other words, readers have never been given any hint of their perfectionism earlier in the story. Instead, "Three Corners" has been portrayed as "an independent bachelor, fond of whores and gambling." The most striking evidence of authorial intervention in the concluding part of the story appears in a sentence that "Three Corners" utters, "In this life, there seems to be a force pushing us towards misery, shame, and ruin." Drastically different from
the protagonist's earlier speech, the sentence sounds more like the author's own voice.

Compared to Hwang Ch'un-ming, Ch'en Ying-chen seems more pessimistic about the intimate relationship between mainlander Chinese and native Taiwanese. The happy couple in Hwang's "Sea-Gazing Days", Ying-ying and Major Lu, are close counterparts of "Little Skinny Maid" and "Three Corners" in terms of their regional origin and social status (Ying-ying is a Taiwanese girl and a former prostitute, while Major Lu is a mainlander soldier). The fate of these two couples is nevertheless different.

In Ch'en's other works which deal with similar theme, the relationship between these two ethnic groups is either doomed to death (such as "My First Case") or separation (such as "Na-mo shuai-lao te yen-lei" 那么衰老的眼泪 (Such Senile Tears)). These tragic stories may lead some readers to the suspicion that Ch'en Ying-chen is one of those who advocate political separatism (i.e., proponent of Independent Taiwan). Ironically, Ch'en Ying-chen is in fact an obstinate advocator of China's reunification who rejects any idea of political separatism. To clarify his position in dealing with these stories, Ch'en proclaims that he was more
concerned with the characters' social background than their regional origin. Yet, one's social background is in many cases indissociably bound up with his or her regional origin in Taiwan society (perhaps, in other societies, too) especially in the earlier days right after the Nationalist government's retreat to Taiwan. Despite Ch'en's clarification, it is still difficult for readers to be oblivious of the fact that the difference in these characters' regional origin does play a part in the tragedies.

A different outcome of the intimate relationship between mainlander Chinese and native Taiwanese can be found in Ch'en later works. In "Night Freight", we see a promising marriage between a mainlander girl and a Taiwanese man. There is even a happy family established by a retired mainlander sergeant and a Taiwanese country woman. All these may indicate that the possibility of establishing an intimate relationship between these two ethnic groups has increased as the cultural assimilation takes place.

National Pride vs. Individual Interest

There is a great shift from "A Couple of Generals" to the next story to be discussed, "Night Freight" in
terms of background setting and publishing date. "A Couple of Generals" takes place in pre-industrial Taiwan, while the background setting of "Night Freight" moves to the center of modern enterprises in Taiwan, Taipei. As far as publishing date is concerned, these two works were completed in two different years which are more than a decade apart from each other. As the first story in the Washington Building series, "Night Freight" examines the dilemma of some intellectuals who work in a U.S.-based transnational company in Taiwan. They are caught up in a situation in which they have to make choice between national pride and individual interest.

Ch'en Ying-chen attempts to convey his nationalistic message through a triangular love story. Two male characters are in a sharp contrast in terms of their personalities and ethical values. Lin Jung-p'ing is a resigned character who would sacrifice his love and integrity only if it is to the best of his self-interest. Chan I-hung who appears unruly and moody on the surface is in fact a principled and uncompromising character. The female protagonist Liu Hsiao-ling, Lin's mainlander secretary and mistress, acts as a pivotal force which helps move the
plot. The episode about her being sexually harassed by the American boss Mr. Morgenthau not only serves as a concrete example of this American boss' lechery but also reveals the resigned character of her lover, Lin Jung-p'ing, who has to pretend to his boss that he knows nothing of it. Moreover, it poignantly suggests the fact that Chinese employees sometimes have to swallow their self-pride if they want to survive in the company. It is in a farewell party for Liu Hsiao-ling, the real conflict between the American boss and Chinese employees explodes.

The tension is gradually built up when Mr. Morgenthau patronizingly quotes, "S.O.B. (Director of Finance of the Pacific Division of the Malamud International Company) said that we multinational companies here will never let Taiwan be wiped off the map..." Following the quotation, Morgenthau continues to remark insultingly, "And you fucking Chinese think the United States is a fucking paradise." The remark arouses Chan I-hung's insuppressible anger. He expresses his protest by resigning his position and asking his boss for a serious apology.

The story ends with a romantic note. Chan I-hung and Liu Hsiao-ling decide to get married and go back to the
countryside in Southern Taiwan, where Chan originally comes from and where he thinks he really belongs. The ending is full of symbolism. The marriage between Chan I-hung and Liu Hsiao-ling symbolizes the marriage of mainlanders and native Taiwanese on the front of anti-imperialism. Their choice of returning to the countryside suggests that the rural area is the last stronghold of nationalism whereas the urban area has been economically invaded by imperialism. The choice also corresponds to the theme which "hsiang-t' u" literary movement underlines. Noticeably, this story was written a year after the debate over "hsiang-t' u" literature started. Ch'en Ying-chen apparently intends to embody in this story some of the his theories of "hsiang-t' u" literature.

Despite its symbolic meaning, the ending of the story poses some questions in terms of its practicality. What can Chan I-hung and Liu Hsiao-ling do to survive after they go to the countryside? Will the countryside remain forever a pure land immune from modernization and the economic invasion of imperialism? All these questions only point out Ch'en ying-chen's idealistic vision of how an individual can resist the overwhelming force of global capitalism.
In addition to idealism, "Night Freight" is also characterized by its sensationalism. The love story of the two protagonists, Chang I-hung and Liu Hsiao-ling, is somewhat like a melodrama. Their physical appearance and relationship are all depicted in a sensational language. For instance, Chan is portrayed as "...uncouth, arrogant, and full of cynicism and rebellion for no good reason," and yet his "ungroomed, angry face touched with savagery, his extraordinarily broad shoulders, his open collar and loosened necktie—all contributed to an ineffable appeal ..." Liu's sexy appeal is summarized as "her thick, long, lushly dark hair made her bare arms appear extremely alluring. Her build was gorgeous, all right, but if it were not for her svelte, sturdy legs, she would not have that special charm, since her face was not that beautiful." Their relationship is full of emotional moments. Sentiments of love and hate as well as scenes of conflicts and reconciliations dominate the plot of the story to a degree that one may wonder if Chan I-hung also overreacts in the party when he resigns to protest.

In contrast with "Night Freight", "One Day in the Life of a White-Collar Worker" is an individual's dilemma revealed in a more realistic context. The
sensationalism found in the former story has considerably diminished in the latter story. The protagonist of "One Day in the life of a White-Collar Worker", Olive Huang, is, to a certain degree, another version of the resigned character in "Night Freight", Lin Jung-p'ing. Both of them are trapped in their ever-growing ambitions and become somewhat depersonalized in the course of pursuing a successful career.

Personal Fulfillment vs. the Reification of Capitalism

Georg Lukacs in his *A History of the Development of Modern Drama* argued that "the conflict between the desire for personal fulfillment and the reified reality formed the basis of modern drama."20 "One Day in the Life of a White-Collar Worker" is a story exemplifying this conflict. It is also suggested in the story that the protagonist, Olive Huang, is only one of numerous victims swallowed by the irresistible force of global capitalism. The force is penetrative and erosive in the sense that it can incur changes in an individual's mentality and the relationship between people.

In the story, the protagonist has gone through various changes in his way of living and thinking. He
used to jam into a bus to get to work, even on a hot day. Now he has formed the habit of taking an air-conditioned cab wherever he goes. He used not to be skilled at lying, but he has now learned at critical points to lie. There is an episode which demonstrates his uneasiness about his own changes. The episode takes place when he is reading Andre Bazin's Essays on Film.

As we are told, film-making used to be Olive's great hobby and dream in the past. But presently, some of the statements in the book seem to have touched upon the most vulnerable part of his feeling:

"In the West the Italian cinema can command a large audience of morally sensitive persons because of the significance it attaches to realistic portrayals. Once again this world is bedeviled by forces of rancor and fear; in a world where truth itself is not loved, but is considered some kind of political symbol, the Italian cinema has produced a radiant humanism which has transformed the world...." Olive felt shocked and on unfamiliar terms with what he was reading, even to the point of anger.  

Georg Lukacs has referred to the process by which capitalism permeates a society as "reification". He further explains the concept as:

Its basis is that a relation between people takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a 'phantom objectivity', an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people.
The human relationship around the protagonist is reflected as:

Suddenly Olive felt friendless and isolated, as though everybody had abandoned him. He had come to the realization (long ago) that the whole world was a huge and powerful, well-meshed machine which he could not comprehend. The world followed the machine's revolutions, never stopping for a second...23

In a world where self-interest and schemes prevail, the human relationship deteriorates. Olive becomes a confidant of his Chinese superior, Bertland Yang, because he helps the latter pad expense accounts, falsify bookkeeping. Since he has the goods on Yang, he expects Yang to help him get the position of assistant manager. When he fails to get the position, he feels cheated by Yang and threatens to quit. At the end of the story, Olive decides to go back to work not because Yang constantly entreats him but because the alluring position is open again.

Throughout the story, Olive recalls his past in his thinking. His youth is portrayed as poor, idealistic, and happy, while his current moment is portrayed as affluent, rational, but unhappy. The author attempts to convey his criticism of modern enterprises and capitalist system through the comparison and contrast between the past and the present in Olive's life.
Occasionally, Ch'en Ying-chen's own value judgements are given in the guise of Olive's random thoughts. Sentences such as "...he (Olive) became a lowly slave to that fickle door of the assistant manager's office, that narrow, lacquered teakwood door which had closed, then opened, and now had shut him out at last." and "He had been a minor actor in an ugly, rotten drama directed by Bertland Yang, a man consumed by lust." are so explicit and conclusive that there is little space left for readers to make their own judgements.

Although the language used in this story is less sensational than the one in "Night Freight", a series of epithets are often seen in the description of a subject or a situation. For instance, Olive's anger is depicted as "...his features were contorted with irrepressible shame, anger, and frustration", whereas Bertland Yang's cunningness is compared to "the wily octopus reaching in every direction with long, boneless, clinging tentacles". This particular linguistic feature constitutes an important element of his reflective style in his earlier stories. This feature, however, appears incompatible with the rest of the story where he seems to intend to achieve a more straightforward, businesslike effect. In the next two stories, "Cloud"
and "The All-incorporating Business God", we still see the presence of this specific linguistic feature but only with less frequencies.

The Interest of Enterprise vs. the Concern over Human Rights

"Cloud" is Ch'en Ying-chen's first attempt to deal with a subject matter concerning the working class, although the story is still narrated from an intellectual's point of view. The protagonist Chang Wei-chieh is the administration manager of Taiwan Merdison, a transnational corporation. Inspired by his American boss, Chang begins to believe that new international enterprises are built on the basis of human freedom and justice. He is further encouraged to realize this ideal by reforming the rubber-stamp labor union of an affiliated factory. Although supported by a group of female workers, his effort is to no avail because of the obstinate resistance of some conservative elements in the company. What disillusions him more is the final remarks made by his American boss: "The security and interest of enterprise should be of higher priority than the concern over human rights."
The story tries to demonstrate the fact that despite some individuals in the system may cherish high ideals, these individuals eventually have to submit themselves to the ultimate goal of modern enterprises, making profits. Chen Ying-chen does not forget to aim his criticism specifically at the U.S.-based transnational incorporation. To him, this kind of incorporation is ruled by certain principles which are often culturally biased and offensive. For instance, Mr. Maybury, president of Far Eastern Division of the Merdison International Company, makes good use of his knowledge about the Orient to help the company expand its orbit in the area. His rather stereotyped conception of the Orient is characterized by his metaphorical remarks: "The Orient is like an affectionate but conservative widow. She will give a man all she has only if he knows how to please her. Even at the most frivolous moment, he has to be very attentive to her dignity as well as all the oriental taboos."

As a nationalist, Ch'en Ying-chen certainly suggests the imperialistic undertone of these remarks. However, at the same time, he seems to put himself in an awkward position. In three out of four stories in the Washington Building Series, the American bosses are portrayed as a
cultural stereotype: flippant and libidinous. If Mr. Mayburry in this story is criticized for being culturally prejudiced, then Ch'en Ying-chen's position is also criticizable. Imperialism is in a sense based on cultural chauvinism, which can be regarded as an overextension of nationalism. Thus, Ch'en's anti-imperialist stand appears self-contradictory when he carries his nationalism too far. The most noticeable example can be found in "Night Freight", where the protagonist Chan I-hung even refers to Americans as "barbarians".

Like "One Day in the Life of a White-Collar Worker", "Cloud" also polarizes the opposition between individual and system. The difference is that the protagonist in "Cloud", instead of surrendering himself to the system, continues the effort to preserve his individual values till the end of the story. Two small episodes at the end indicate the restoration of the protagonist's ideal and personal life which are almost sacrificed while he is trying to survive in the business world. One takes place when he drafts a letter to reprehend a Japanese client for failing to observe the previous agreement. The other episode occurs when he leaves a short note to his secretary to ask her for a
date. This romantic touch seems to help portray the protagonist as a more ideal individual who does not lose his human sentiment in a world where rationality predominates.

The story is mainly narrated in the form of the protagonist's recollection of the past. A female worker's diary constitutes workers' side of the story about the reform of the labor union. Ch'en Ying-chen's great challenge in writing this story is to simulate this female worker's language and experience. In order to achieve the effect, he occasionally inserts some Taiwanese and even dirty words in the dialogues among workers. The language in certain part of the diary, nevertheless, seems more like an intellectual than a worker. In the last day of the diary, the voice sounds particularly similar to the author's own.

Nationalism vs. Internationalism

It seems to Ch'en Ying-chen, the latent threat of global capitalism lies in its godlike power of eliminating differences among individuals and nations. In the first three stories in the Washington Building Series, he portrays the image of modern enterprise as a
force which devours the individual's desire for personal fulfillment. The force is yet looming large. In the very last story of the series, "The All-incorporating Business God", the individual differences (in terms of political belief and regional origin) as well as national cultural differences all dissolve in the face of the so-called "internationalism" promoted by transnational incorporations.

In this piece of fictional work, Ch'en Ying-chen makes an attempt to confront closely the up-to-date social, political, and cultural issues in Taiwan society. Three main characters in this story are deliberately designed in order to bring in these issues in a seemingly spontaneous way.

The business manager Ch'en Chia-ch'i and the marketing manager Liu Fu-chin (or Liu Hokk-Kim in the story) represent two types of people contrastive in both professional attitude and political conviction. Ch'en, a mainlander, is a political loyalist. Professionally, he tends to depend more on his empirical knowledge rather than pure theories. Liu, a native Taiwanese who contends that Taiwan has its unique culture and society independent of China, is a non-party activist. His knowledge of marketing and management is
more theoretical than empirical. The third main character, Lin Te-wang 林德旺, is another native Taiwanese but with no particular political conviction. He is a custom coordinator but obsessed with his dream of becoming a manager in the transnational incorporation.

The plot of the story is divided into two lines. One line concentrates mainly on the differences and competitions between Ch'en Chia-ch'i and Liu Fu-chin. The other line traces Lin Te-wang's personal history in which we find the cause of his earlier and later mental disorder. These two lines converge in the final part of the story in which a large scale international business conference takes place. In the conference, a kind of global consciousness is gradually formed among all the managerial personnel involved. They are encouraged to perceive their roles in an international context instead of national context.

Two episodes occur in the middle of the conference. Lin Te-wang, who crazily considers himself as an all-incorporating god, appears in the site of the conference. The other episode is the great stir among representatives from Taiwan caused by President Carter's announcement of establishing diplomatic relationship
with China. But after being reassured by the prediction that multinational incorporations will be powerful enough to fasten Communist China with the "belt of capitalism", they begin to feel optimistic about their future. After the conference, Ch'en Chia-ch'i and Liu Fu-chin not only reconcile their conflicts but also reach the agreement that nationalism is irrational and dispensable.

Lin Te-wang's appearance in the conference serves both metaphorical and allegorical function. Global capitalism is in a sense the god of the modern world characterized by its commodity fetishism. It has penetrative power to reshape an individual's ideology and a nation's culture. Like the madman in Lu Hsun's "K'uang-jen jih-chi" (Diary of a Madman, 1918), Lin also brings readers the author's message under the guise of insanity. He pronounces the message as if he were an all-incorporating business god: "Those of you who have commercial intercourse all over the world ought not to corrupt other people's customs and to defraud their money." "To corrupt other people's customs" may be transcribed into Ch'en Ying-chen's language as "to obliterate other nations' cultural traits". Since one of the major themes of the
conference is the study of consumers' behavior patterns, "to defraud their money" in the message may be interpreted as "to entice them to consume".

The other episode in the final part seems to serve as a touchstone of international loyalty that transnational corporations try to promote among its managerial personnel since it is the moment when those representatives from Taiwan have to suppress with difficulty their patriotic sentiments and national loyalty. At the end, internationality proves to override regionality and nationality. A political hardliner like Liu Fu-chin is even ready to place his new identity as a "global marketing man" prior to his old Taiwanese identity.

Despite Ch'en Ying-chen's effort to make the story meaningful and plausible, its final part appears somewhat unconvincing. It is difficult for readers to believe that the political convictions of Ch'en Chia-ch'i and Liu Fu-chin can be dissolved within such a short time and without any trace of struggle. The new international identity for them is more likely a kind of momentary euphoria that they enjoy in the conference. Can these people be completely divorced from other social ties? If not, then, will their political
convictions come back to work again once they get in touch with the immediate reality? And, how powerful are those slogans such as "international loyalty" and "global marketing man" if they remain merely conceptual?

The story, nevertheless, helps us understand the position that Ch'en Ying-chen takes in the debate over "hsiang-t' u" literature. To him, modernist literature in Taiwan is a by-product of the trend of socio-economic westernization and internationalization. The whole "hsiang-t' u" literary movement, highlighting the preservation of national cultural traits, is in fact fighting against the trend.

Romantic Anti-Capitalism

It seems to Ch'en Ying-chen that modernization in the third-world is equivalent to westernization and will definitely lead to the elimination of the cultural traits of these countries. Some scholars, however, hold a different view. Chin Yao-chi, for instance, argued:

All the modernized societies, whether western or eastern, share certain common characteristics, such as industrialization, urbanization, secularization, etc. Meanwhile, any modernized society also possesses its distinctive character... The reason that each modernized society is distinctive lies not only in its individual race and language but also in its history and culture.
Moreover, capitalism, though powerful, is not as omnipotent in the third-world as Ch'en Ying-chen portrays in the story. Aijaz Ahmad, a Marxist critic, also pointed out:

The kind of circuits that bind the cultural complexes of the advanced capitalist countries simply do not exist among countries of backward capitalism (or, in Ch'en's term, the third-world countries), and capitalism itself, which is dominant but not altogether universalized, does not yet have the same power of homogenisation in its cultural logic in most of these countries, except among the urban bourgeoisie.2

Although Ch'en Ying-chen's position of anti-capitalism appears quite outstanding in Taiwan society, his attitude may share some similarities with a host of western predecessors whose opposition to capitalism falls into the category of romantic anti-capitalism. According to Rodney Livingstone:

What was romantic anti-capitalism? Following Lowy's account, we may think of it as a wide spectrum of opposition to capitalism, ultimately tracing its roots back to the romantic movement, but acquiring a new impetus in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It includes such disparate figures as Ferdinand Tonnies, Georg Simmel, Max Weber, Thomas Mann, Stefan George and Ernst Toller. Capitalism is attacked for a variety of reasons... It may be summed up in the polar opposites of 'culture' versus 'civilization', the plea for a universe governed by qualitative values as opposed to the logic of rationality and the cash nexus.27
As noted before, Ch'en Ying-chen's strong commitment to nationalism constitutes the core of his anti-capitalism. Like many Chinese intellectuals in the modern period, Ch'en is preoccupied with the humiliations which China has gone through since the Opium War (1839-1840). For him, imperialism is the major factor which caused China's humiliations in the past and it is his unshirkable responsibility to help strengthen the nationalist sentiments of his fellow countrymen in order to resist any form of imperialism.

In his view, Taiwan, in the world system of capitalism, has fallen under the control of capitalist hegemony. Economically and culturally, Taiwan has become an American colony. His theorization of "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies fully demonstrates this point. To him, "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies inherits the anti-imperialist legacy handed down from the Occupation Period. The slight difference between "hsiang-t'u" literature in these two stages lies in that "hsiang-t'u" literature in the Occupation Period protests against political imperialism, whereas "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies protests against economic and cultural imperialism. 28
The kind of nationalism proposed by Ch'en Ying-chen is based upon his theory that Taiwan belongs to China and Taiwan literature is always part of Chinese literature. He opposes the so-called "Taiwanese consciousness" which stresses the uniqueness and independence of Taiwanese culture. During the debate over "hsiang-t'u" literature, he wrote an article entitled "Hsiang-t'u wen-hsueh te mang-tien" (The Blind Spot in "Hsiang-t'u" Literature) to criticize the "Taiwanese consciousness" evinced in the theory of some "hsiang-t'u" advocates.²⁹ To him, "Taiwanese consciousness" should be built upon the foundation of "Chinese consciousness".

Ch'en's criticism of "Taiwanese consciousness" resulted in another debate among the advocators of "hsiang-t'u" literature between 1982-1984.³⁰ The debate, although took place in a different socio-political context, essentially echoed the similar dispute during the Occupation Period (see "The Split of Consciousness" in Chapter One). Those who did not agree with Ch'en Ying-chen, laid special emphasis on the different social systems between China and Taiwan. For them, Taiwan literature should take root in its own immediate reality and develop its own characteristics distinct from
Chinese literature. The conflict between Ch'en Ying-chen and his opponents is not only a literary issue but also a political one. The dispute will remain irreconcilable unless the relationship between China and Taiwan can reach a final political solution.

As a fiction writer, Ch'en Ying-chen, like most writers of committed literature, is more preoccupied with content than fictional techniques. His Washington Building Series is a particularly obvious example. Insofar as the plot is concerned, Ch'en Ying-chen's stories are generally less spontaneous than Hwang Chun-ming's and sometimes may even be suspected of being contrived. Also unlike Wang Chen-ho's maintaining certain distance from the narrator of his stories, Ch'en's moral principles are often felt in his fictional works.

Ch'en's ideological preoccupation has affected the characterization of his stories to a certain degree. Readers acquire their understanding of Ch'en's characters more frequently through his descriptive language than through those characters' own actions or conversations with others. In other words, Ch'en seems to depend more on the technique of "telling" than on that of "showing". As a result, characters in some of his stories appear to
function merely as a messenger or the embodiment of a certain type of concept instead of full-fledged characters. "The All-incorporating Business God" is an example in the case.

From "The Country Village Teacher" to "The All-incorporating Business God", Ch'en Ying-chen's narrative stance changes from romantic to didactic. The didactic tone is also shared by the other two "hsiang-t'u" writers, Hwang Chun-ming and Wang Chen-ho, when they deal with nationalist theme. This common characteristic of three "hsiang-t'u" writers seems to suggest that they perceive nationalism not only as a cultural issue but also as a moral issue.

One thing worth mentioning at last is the rather westernized syntactical structure of his language. Many of Ch'en Ying-chen's sentences read like direct Chinese translations of English originals. One of the most distinctive features of his sentence structure is the use of lengthy and redundant relative clauses as noun modifiers. It seems to be common for Chinese who also have a good command of English to speak or write Chinese with some interference of English. Ch'en Ying-chen's case appears, nevertheless, more conspicuous and remarkable. And this westernized trace of his language
may serve as a little irony of his criticism of the cultural westernization in Taiwan society.
Notes to Chapter Six


4. Ibid., p. 170.

5. Ch'en himself suspects that his participation in Marxist study groups might be the cause for this accusation. See Jeffrey C. Kinkley's "From Oppression to Dependency: Two Stages in the Fiction of Chen Yingzhen" in Modern China, vol. 16, No. 3 (July, 1990), pp. 243-268.


7. Bloody conflicts between mainlanders and Taiwanese refer particularly to the incident which occurred on February 28, 1947. See Chapter Two for detail.

8. Lucien Miller points out that the keynote in Ch'en Ying-chen's writing, both fiction and essays, is "reflection". See his "A Break in the Chain: The Short Stories of Ch'en Ying-chen" in Chinese Fiction from Taiwan, p. 86.

10. Kinkley, Jeffrey C., "From Oppression to Dependency", p. 245.

11. See Li-shih te ku-erh; ku-erh te li-shih, p. 166.


13. Shan-lu, p. 106; Exiles at Home, p. 43.

14. Ch'iu Ya-ts'ai, for instance, expressed his doubt about the psychological justification of this suicide. See his "Ch'en Ying-chen hsiao-shuo te ch'ing-i-ch'ieh" (The Emotional Complex in Ch'en Ying-chen's Fiction), Tzu-li wan-pao, August 4-6, 1988.

15. The sentence has changed into: "This carcass of mine stinks more than yours." in a later version of the story.


17. All the translation of "Night Freight" is quoted from The Unbroken Chain: An Anthology of Taiwan Fiction since 1926, ed. by Joseph S.M. Lau, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 103-132. The translator of this particular story is James C. T. Shu.

18. Ibid., p. 111.

19. Ibid., p. 104.

20. See Rodney Livingstone's introduction to Essays on Realism, pp. 4-5.


23. Yun, p. 72; Exiles at Home, pp. 179-180. "Long ago" is an incorrect translation for adverb "ts'ai" and should be replaced by "all of a sudden" or "suddenly".


27. Livingstone, Rodney. Introduction to Essays on Realism, p. 4.


29. Ibid., pp. 17-23.


31. Ibid., p. 227.
Conclusion

As demonstrated in the second part of this study, Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies refers to a heterogeneous body of literary works rather than to a homogenous corpus as defined by "hsiang-t'u" theoreticians. This phenomenon may be explained by the fact that "hsiang-t'u" literature is an arbitrary grouping defined exclusively by the regional origin of the writers instead of the nature of their works.

Among the three "hsiang-t'u" writers, Ch'en Ying-chen appears to be the one who adheres most closely to the critical categorization provided by "hsiang-t'u" promoters, since he is a "hsiang-t'u" theoretician himself. Wang Chen-ho, unlike other "hsiang-t'u" writers, is more concerned with artistic form and technique than with content. The iconoclasm revealed in his writing suggests that he is spiritually more akin to modernist writers than to other "hsiang-t'u" writers. Wang Chen-ho's case also suggests a reconciliation between modernist literature and "hsiang-t'u"
literature and serves as an example of how Western literary influence can enrich the tradition of "hsiang-t'u" literature or Chinese literature as a whole. As in Wang Chen-ho, western influence can also be found in Ch'en Ying-chen's linguistic style as demonstrated in the last chapter. Western influences on these two writers may not result from their intention but from their literary training. This may lead us to the conclusion that Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies was no longer authentically indigenous. To "hsiang-t'u" literature, Western influence may be seen as a mixed blessing: it enriches the tradition of "hsiang-t'u" literature, while at the same time, undermining its nationalistic characteristics.

Corresponding to Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature's effort to reaffirm the value of Chinese culture in the process of modernization, there has also been a similar cultural "hsun-ken" (roots-seeking) trend taking place in mainland China after the Cultural Revolution. Like Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies, the "hsun-ken" trend in China also aroused some controversies. One of the controversial issues concerns the relation between traditional Chinese culture and contemporary consciousness. Some critics
argued that the reinforcement of traditional culture might weaken contemporary consciousness, while others maintained that the "hsun-ken" trend should be seen as a reflection of the contemporary consciousness instead of a pure revival of traditional culture. The issue, although not discussed in the debate over "hsiang-t'\u2018u" literature, seemed to touch upon the underlying difference between modernist literature and "hsiang-t'\u2018u" literature in Taiwan.

As demonstrated in the foregoing chapters, Taiwan "hsiang-t'\u2018u" literature in the seventies inherited some of the spiritual and literary legacies of the May Fourth period, the fountainhead of modern Chinese literature. On the part of "hsiang-t'\u2018u" theoreticians, they unequivocally shared the anti-imperialist spirit with those intellectuals in the May Fourth era, although the content of their protest, unlike their May Fourth counterpart, emphasized the economic and cultural aspects rather than political ones. Such credos as "literature for life's sake", "national literature" and "national form" promoted by "hsiang-t'\u2018u" theoreticians are some of the more identifiable echoes of the literary slogans in the May Fourth period.
Among the three "hsiang-t'u" writers discussed in this study, Ch'en Ying-chen's personal temperament exemplified in his writing bears a romantic ethos which also characterized many men of letters of the May Fourth generation. As Leo Ou-fan Lee observed at one point, "a true romantic can never feel comfortable in any status quo, any established system; he aspires to, but can never realize, a utopia." Ch'en's anti-capitalism and disappointment at the socialist system implemented in China may be explained in part by this romantic disposition. Lavrin's argument about the cause of romanticism seems also applicable to Ch'en Ying-chen's case. "What is known as romanticism was, above all," he observed, "an inner reaction to that transitional period which dislocated all former ways and values, mixed up all classes, destroyed all faith, all proper orientation." Lavrin's observation appears to be in considerable accord with Ch'en's own analysis of himself and his time in "A Tentative Comment on Ch'en Ying-chen" (quoted in Chapter Six).

The more significant linkage between Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies and the fiction writing of the May Fourth period lies in their common adoption of "realism" as the major literary mode. Marston
Anderson has pointed out, "the term 'realism' was introduced into China in two stages, first in the context of the late Ch'ing crusade for national restoration (chiu-kuo 精國 ) and later as part of the May Fourth campaign for enlightenment (ch'i-meng 攻擊 )." This statement can be further supported by the case of Taiwan "hsiang-t'u" literature in the seventies since it was also a product of cultural transformation as discussed above. Anderson also suggested that Chinese intellectuals' endorsement of "realism" was on the one hand predisposed by their deep-seated didactic and pragmatic literary tradition and on the other attracted by the mode's great potential of effecting certain social functions (such as encouraging the readers of realism to get actively involved in social and political issues). "Hsiang-t'u" theoreticians' glorification of "realist literature" proved to be another example of this tradition. In its actual operation, however, "realism would appear to lead only to a private experience of reconciliation with inalterable realities." This may help explain why some "hsiang-t'u" writers, such as Wang T'o and Yang Ch'ing-ch' u, became political activists after they had realized that their works of social criticism failed to result in
any action or reform.

The narrative stance of three "hsiang-t'u" writers fully reflects the characteristics of the historical transition period to which they belong. In Hwang Chun-ming's works, we see the rural-urban transition which also results in a shift from romantic to didactic in his narrative stance. The narrative stance in Wang Chen-ho's works reveals the influence of western modernism on the "hsiang-t'u" literature in a transition period. In Ch'en Ying-chen's case, we also see the duality in the narrative stance, romantic in his earlier stories and didactic in his later works.

Although "hsiang-t'u" literature cannot be defined solely by its language (the use of local dialect) or subject matters (such as the local customs and the life style of rural Taiwan), these two elements constitute the important feature of its regionalism. The regionalism revealed in three "hsiang-t'u" writers varies in terms of degree and aspect. Insofar as language is concerned, Wang Chen-ho adopts a greater quantity of Taiwanese in his works than the other two writers. Hwang Chun-ming's works, however, capture more variety of local color than the other two writers. Among the three writers, Ch'en Ying-chen's works display the least degree of
regionalism. If regionalism in "hsiang-t'u" literature can be seen as the indicator of "Taiwanese consciousness", Ch'en Ying-chen's case corresponds precisely to the fact that he champions "Chinese consciousness" over "Taiwanese consciousness".

With the fact that Taiwan society became more modernized after the seventies and Mandarin (tinted by the influence of Taiwanese) became more popularized among the younger generation, "hsiang-t'u" literature in the eighties expectably assumed a different outlook than it did in the seventies.

The change of social and political parameters also contributed to a rather different literary scene in Taiwan in the eighties. Socially, the division between mainlanders and Taiwanese was gradually softened through marriage and through their shared living experiences in Taiwan for four decades. They seemed to hold "a new, common, island-based identity which Taiwan's plummeting diplomatic fortunes reinforced."

The difference in regional origin which used to be so sensitive a socio-political issue and which constituted the primary factor to set off "hsiang-t'u" writers as a unique group in the seventies became less significant in the eighties. So did the term "hsiang-t'u" literature. Politically, the
decade of the eighties (especially the second half of the decade) in Taiwan witnessed a thaw of authoritarian rule and the rise of democratic forces based on the demands of middle class. Although political democratization did sometimes result in confusion or even chaos in social order, it provided an atmosphere conducive to the transformation of people's old monistic mentality into pluralistic one. "Hsiang-t'u" literature in the eighties, blooming in the context of a "middle-class consumer society"\textsuperscript{8}, no longer served as the spokesman of the poor and underprivileged but demonstrated more individuality and diversity.\textsuperscript{9}

Whether the tension between "modernization" and "the traditional," between "westernization" and the indigenous and regional will always remain is an open question. "Hsiang-t'u" literature nevertheless stands for the cultural expression of a transitional period in Taiwan. More significantly, in this expression, we see cultural continuity and discontinuity as well as the Western impact on the Chinese culture resulting from modernization.

What I have done in this study is only a preliminary work, there are still many fruitful areas of "hsiang-t'u" literature to be explored. Some potential subjects,
such as the emergence and development of political fiction in Taiwan and the comparison and contrast between "hsiang-t'u" literature in Taiwan and "hsun-ken" literature in China, will make important contribution to Chinese literary studies in general.
Notes to Conclusion


3. Ibid., p. 295.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 19.

7. Gold, Thomas B. State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle, p. 119.

8. Ibid., p. 118.

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