

Xia Ji'an's (T.A. Hsia) Critical Bridge to Modernism in Taiwan

Christopher Lupke

The 1950s was a decade in Taiwan that saw many historical novels depicting life during the War of Resistance on the Mainland and the Civil War between the Nationalists and the Communists. Most of these were serialized in journals supported by the government (such as *Wenyi chuangzuo* [Literary creation]) though some were published in independent journals such as *Ziyou Zhongguo* [Free China]. I intend to discuss one such novel, *Luoyue* [Setting moon] by Peng Ge (originally Yao Peng; b. 1926), as well as the lengthy critique of it, "Ping *Luoyue* jian lun xiandai xiaoshuo" [A critique of *Setting Moon* and a discussion of modern fiction] by Xia Ji'an (known in English as T.A. Hsia; 1916-1965). Peng Ge's novel features the heroine Yu Xinmei, a Peking¹ opera singer who becomes a spy for the War of Resistance. Following her travails as a young woman through Peking, Tianjin, and eventually Taipei, the novel typifies the sort of historical romance popular in Taiwan during the 1950s. Dissatisfied with the loosely structured style of the work, as well as the general state of narrative literature in the 1950s, Xia's immanent critique actually contains many latent prescriptions for the way in which Chinese narrative should evolve stylistically and thematically. Thus, the publication of this novel, emblematic of the period, and the subsequent critique by Xia signify a crucial watershed for Taiwan literature, as the subsequent wave of writers, the so-called "Modernist" group, were largely composed of his own students who generally rejected historical narrative as a mode of literary depiction. More than simply one novel among

文藝創作

自由中國
落月 彭歌
姚朋 評《落月》
兼論現代小說

夏濟安
余心梅

¹ Throughout the novel, Peking is referred to as "Beiping" as was the practice in Taiwan until the 1980s. As a compromise, I have opted for the use of "Peking" over both the anachronistic "Beiping" and the textually unfaithful "Beijing."

北平

many of the period, Peng Ge's *Setting Moon* served as a springboard for Xia's promulgation of New Criticism, and by extension, Modernism.

Peng Ge's novel was written under the umbrella of a powerful culture industry essentially spearheaded by Zhang Daofan (originally Zhang Zhenzong; 1896-1968). Zhang was a conservative and prominent member of the GMD party, both in Chongqing and Taiwan during the 1950s in the 1940s. He served as Director of the Propaganda Bureau for the Nationalist Government during the Chongqing years and in Taiwan during the 1950s he served as Speaker of the Legislative Yuan. The culture industry built over the first half of the 1950s by Zhang Daofan and his associates was a formidable one, and although the literary infrastructure (the journals, the newspaper literary supplements, and the prizes) formed the crucial backbone of how public exhibitions of literature were brought about, ideological challenges to the cultural hegemony he had established in Taiwan during the 1950s were sure to arise.²

Setting Moon was serialized in *Ziyou Zhongguo* from January 16, 1956 to June 1 of the same year. *Ziyou Zhongguo* was a broad-ranging journal that published articles on domestic and international politics as well as that of Taiwan, articles of topical interest on social issues, editorials, and a few literary works in every issue. The editor was Lei Zhen (1897-1979), a liberal member of the GMD with ties that reach back to Chongqing as well. While in no way an apologist for the PRC regime, Lei Zhen was nevertheless a relentless critic of the autocratic tendencies of Chiang Kai-shek. Throughout the 1950s, Lei used his journal as a venue to call for the establishment of an independent party in Taiwan on an equal footing with the GMD. He also argued that the ROC should dispense with its official plan to regain the mainland. More so than at any time until the death of Chiang Ching-kuo in the late 1980s, Lei's criticisms of the ruling party were uncompromising. When he was imprisoned at the end of the 1950s and *Ziyou Zhongguo* was banned, the most vocal dissident in post-1949 Taiwan was silenced for good. He was not posthumously rehabilitated until after Chiang Ching-kuo had died.

² For more information on Zhang Daofan, see Lupke (1993: 15ff).

張道藩
張振宗

立法院院長

雷震

It may seem somewhat paradoxical that a conservative like Peng Ge would publish in this journal. There are three reasons why he may have chosen to do so. First, while a conservative member of the GMD, Peng Ge's reputation as the most important conservative voice on Taiwan's cultural scene was not solidified until he had fully matured in the 1960s as the publisher of *Zhongyang ribao* [The central daily], a major organ that articulated GMD party policy and opinion for three decades. During the 1950s, Peng Ge was best known simply as a journalist and writer of historical romance. Second, at this point in the evolution of Chinese fiction in Taiwan, most of the active writers were generally of the same stripe: they grew up on the mainland and found themselves, for one reason or another, fleeing with the Nationalist government to Taiwan. Thus, their various works almost all share a general plot development that describes this experience. Peng Ge does not stand out in that way; on the contrary, he exemplifies it. Finally, it has been suggested verbally to me that it may have been politic on the part of *Ziyou Zhongguo's* editors to have Peng Ge publish in their journal as a way of possibly insulating it from right wing attacks. After all, Lei Zhen and the editorial board were savvy enough to ensure that the publisher of the journal, nominal as he may have been, be no less a figure than Hu Shi (1891-1962). Hu's stature was so great in Taiwan that he was virtually untouchable by the GMD's ideology police.

1956 was an interesting point in Taiwan's recent history, midway through the first and most dangerous decade of the Cold War. During the early 1950s when the Korean War was raging, Chiang Kai-shek was able to neutralize much of his opposition by arguing that the island could not risk even the possibility of fractiousness lest the Communists extend their reach from mainland China, through the Korean peninsula and into Taiwan. The Red Scare psychology permeated global politics and while McCarthyism reigned in the United States, anti-Communist fears in Taiwan reached almost unimaginable levels, so close as it was to the center of Communist power in the postwar period. In this context, the courage of Lei Zhen is that much more remarkable. By this point the Korean War had reached a stalemate, and in Taiwan the Cold War had become more routinized. This was before the bombing on Matsu and

中央日報

胡適

馬祖

(24)

自由中國 第十四卷 第二期 落月(一)

落月 (一)

彭歌

七二

寂靜的晚秋之夜，彷彿是半盞殘茶，盛在澄明的杯子裏；又冷，又濕，又淒涼。

也許是夜太靜了，也許是房子太大，使得余心梅更覺得空虛起來。她憤慨過，哭泣過，但都沒有像現在這一刻這麼難挨。人傷心到了極點，會連傷心也覺得是多餘的。她好像是一個人困守在一座碉堡中孤軍作戰，和她對敵的，是碉堡以外的整個世界。

卓如終於和她分別了，這一段匆促的姻緣就是這樣子悲劇性地結束了。從一開始心梅就有一種不幸的預感，好像早就預見到黯淡的結局。所以，事到如今，她反不覺得有痛恨、悲傷和懺悔的必要了。

她覺得空虛，無底的空虛……

愛情假使只是一種奉獻和犧牲，那麼她做的已經够多了。付出去的感情，永遠收不回來；消耗了的青春，也永遠無法補償。其實，真正的犧牲，無論出於甚麼方式，都是不能收回，無法補償的，也惟其如此，才覺得它的可貴。譬如心梅，她現在除了這一點點為愛而自我犧牲的情操來鼓勵着自己，還有甚麼力量能支持她活下去呢？

不錯，她還有個女兒，那是她和卓如同居近兩年來留下來的唯一的紀念品，一個孱弱的美麗得近乎精緻的紀念品。可是小梅畢竟太小了。那孩子無法成爲一個容器，來完全接受母親心中澎湃進流的激情。

孩子早就睡熟了，心梅坐在床邊發愣。從孩子睡去的姿勢上看到了自己的童年；又從她那感傷的

眉梢眼界渺渺茫茫地看到了自己的未來。她忽然想，這好像是「人」與「人生」在較力。「難道我已經需要下一代做後援了嗎？」她懷恨悲感。

她茫茫然地扳開了收音機的電鈕。她不見得真的需要聽甚麼，而只是爲的滿足一種要反抗過去的真潛意識。

自從她和卓如同居的那一天，她就與舞臺生活以及與舞臺有關的一切完全一刀兩斷了。既然愛情的本身就是幸福，那麼她就不需要別來的陪襯幸福了。背叛藝術而遷就愛情，這在當時是多麼重大的一件事呵，可是她却決定得那麼明快輕率，簡直是孤注一擲。

不但自己不再演戲，索興連別人唱戲也不聽了。她說她要回復到一個平常的女性，享受安穩而平凡的家庭生活。她很自傲地想：真正得到一個人的愛要勝過萬千人的讚揚。

可是，那個人已經去了，只有寂寞陪伴着她。「如今還是聽聽戲吧！」單是這麼一件小事，已經證明她是甘心向「人生」低頭服輸了。

現在大約是夜晚十點半鐘，各電臺都是平劇節目。有一家是一位老教師「空中教學」，教的是譚派發生的「洪洋洞」——「嘆楊家投宋主心肝刺死」那一段一黃正板，那蒼涼的聲音，活活的刻劃出一個功業未竟而命在垂危的瀟灑英雄的心聲，將軍白髮征夫淚，這是何等悽惻悲壯的景象呵。心梅自己覺得今晚的心情特別容易受感動，所以便扭動電鈕，改換波長。

另一家所播出來的亂哄哄的聲音，一上來就把她吸引住了。爲甚麼每一種聲音都是這麼熟悉？從

鑼鼓、胡琴，到每一個角色的唱念，甚至於觀眾的哄笑聲，喝采聲，「哦，是的，這是——」心梅只是呆呆地聽下去，不忍多聽。她似乎是自己不由己地倚靠在那個電鈕最近的長沙發椅上。她把操縱音量大小的那個電鈕向左轉，使那聲音小到只有她一個人可以聽得到。她似乎是一半羞怯，一半得意地這樣做——

因爲那收音機中所放送的，正是她自己以前主演的「梅龍鎮」的錄音。她帶着幾分好奇去聽自己的聲音，那種珠圓玉潤的聲音，好像永遠也不可能再從她口中發出來了。這便使她感到一種說不出來的迷惘。

「梅龍鎮」並不算是甚麼重頭戲，她過去只有在演變的時候才露一露。主要的角色不過兩個人：富貴風流的正德皇帝，和蓬門碧玉嬌小玲瓏的李鳳姐。正德微服出巡，在山西大同附近的梅龍鎮一個小酒店中，遇到了這個「酒大姐」，經過了一番調情，皇帝老爺最後就「封她一宮」，收爲妃妾了。戲文很簡單，唱作也不算十分繁重，可是其中有許多輕巧得近乎飄然的小動作，要聽衆心領神會，那是收音機所無法傳播的。心梅一聽兒聽，一邊兒不由得幻想着此身已回到舞臺上。在記憶中重新溫習着每一個節奏和身段，譬如當正德皇帝踩住她的彩巾不許她走，而她又向他求情，後來騙着他注意別的地方，然後把他推開了的那一段，胡琴的每一個過門兒，夾着臺下觀眾們開心的笑聲，都使心梅心動神搖，呵，舞臺離開她太遙遠了。她簡直不明白她自己以前爲了甚麼那樣熱心表演過了。

除了她自己的婉轉的聲音之外，更使她感激的，是那千千萬萬不相識的觀眾羣中所發出來的巨雷驟雨似的喝采聲與鼓掌聲。那是如何一個生活在舞臺上的人所渴求着的營養劑，她却是如何探取食物一般輕易得來。那麼多的人，只是爲了欣賞她的歌聲，瞻望她的顏色，從很遠的地方跑來，要在戲院門前排好幾個鐘頭的隊，或者是要化好幾十塊錢的代價

Quemoy, before the Cuban Missile Crisis, and before the supreme debacle of the Vietnam War. In fact, Cao Juren, a Chinese journalist in Hong Kong with “a reputation for being both anti-Communist and anti-Nationalist,” advocated a secret meeting with the Communists designed to begin some discussion of rapprochement, though this plan was almost immediately squashed by Chiang Ching-kuo, then Director of the Security Bureau.³ Throughout the year, Lei Zhen and his group kept up their criticism of the government and called for the establishment of an opposition party. At the same time, *Ziyou Zhongguo* continued to publish the standard fare of short stories and novels by the mainlander writers. And at least in one instance, an article bashing Communist literary criticism was published (Li 1956).

It was under these circumstances that Peng Ge wrote and published *Setting Moon*. The novel begins with the main character Yu Xinmei in Taipei reflecting upon her career in the Peking opera and her separation from a lover. Beginning with the second chapter and extending through the final chapter, the novel tells Xinmei's story from childhood as a young aficionado of the theatre, through her travails in an opera school, her career as a singer, her work as a spy against the Japanese during the War of Resistance, and finally to her retreat to Taiwan. Xinmei grew up in marginal poverty as the daughter of a hard-working, earnest mother and a somewhat shiftless father who looked upon his peers and neighbors with some disdain. However, there was one thing that he esteemed greatly, and that was the Peking opera. Xinmei's father would frequently take her to the opera as a child.

Xinmei's father died when she was relatively young. And after that she enrolled in an opera school where she studied singing and dance for several years. She left the school after a traumatic incident in which a friend of hers was maligned by a fellow classmate and driven to his death. From then, Xinmei moved to Tianjin and became a professional singer/dancer in the local theaters. Though not explicitly stated, it seems she sacrificed a possible career in the pure form of the opera in Peking for the commercial opera of Tianjin, an occupation that

³ See the coverage in *Time* magazine on January 16, 1956.

could be looked upon as being somewhat unseemly and associated with something akin to an escort service. Though this was not the avenue she had envisioned herself pursuing, it turned out to be a lucrative career, one at which she was highly talented. She became a very popular star in Tianjin. By this point, the War of Resistance was beginning to rage in China, and though she found it unsavory, Xinmei was forced to take on several high-paying clients who were either part of the puppet government favoring Japan or Japanese military and business figures. She was recruited by a Chinese spy working to subvert the Japanese. She helped foil some major Japanese business deals and efforts to smuggle goods out of China in exchange for drugs. However, the position as double agent wore heavily on her and eventually she retired to the liberated area where she could recuperate. After the war, Xinmei made a short-lived attempt to return to the Peking-Tianjin area, but too much had changed and she decided to leave for Taiwan.

It is in the descriptions of her time in Taiwan, especially chapter ten, where the strongest anti-Communist sentiments in the book appear. In fact, *Setting Moon* is not a particularly ideological work in that way, though clearly the sentiments are in favor of the Nationalists. The book is essentially a historical romance. Xinmei was brought out of retirement in Taiwan, however, to sing operas and boost the morale of soldiers, particularly those stationed in the forward areas, small islands near the coast of mainland China. There are some sympathetic depictions of the soldiers in this part of the book, but in the end the novel shifts back to Xinmei's personal story. She reunited with one of her past lovers, but after a brief liaison they parted for good. While no one would ever mistake *Setting Moon* for a great novel, one cannot make the argument that it is foremost a novel of political propaganda, as is usually assumed of Taiwan fiction of the 1950s. Of course the novel does not really reflect the feelings of people living permanently in Taiwan and is divorced from Taiwanese cultural concerns. Later on in this article I will discuss in detail Xia Ji'an's critique of the novel which was based not so much on the book's ideological leanings as on its structural weaknesses.

The Establishment of an Autonomous Elite on Taiwan

The most formidable challenge to Zhang Daofan's cultural dominant, of which Peng Ge's work was a product, was put forth by Xia Ji'an. The vehicle for this counter hegemony was the journal *Wenxue zazhi* [Literary review], founded in 1956 and at least partially independent of the established clique of writers closely associated with the GMD ruling regime. Ideologically, Xia's project was not entirely designed to subvert the literary establishment in the sense that, for example, Socialist realism sought to establish a new discursive practice that militated against perceived elitist tendencies in the PRC. Also, although politics was involved, there was an indication that overt political conservatives such as Liang Shiqiu (originally Liang Zhihua; 1901-1987) supported and encouraged the break from the established set of journals. Moreover, with the folding of party-sponsored journals such as *Wenyi chuanguo*, and the increasingly precarious position of *Ziyou Zhongguo*, a void was beginning to form in the realm of literary and cultural journals in Taiwan. *Wenxue zazhi* provided an opportunity for writers, old and new alike, to publish in a journal that enjoyed autonomy from the government, maintained a close association with the academy, and yet did not raise the ire of Chiang Kai-shek and his ilk. Xia may have been able to wend a path between the conservative and reform camps in Taiwan by summoning some of the poetics of the Republican era. Strong echoes of Liang Shiqiu's work, for example, can be found in the writings of Xia.

The importation by Liang Shiqiu of the tenets of Babbitt's humanism is a major chapter in the literary history of China, especially with regard to how these notions have gained currency in Taiwan. In fact, this process of transvaluation is a significant example of the epistemological relationship between China and European thought in the twentieth century. Babbitt's form of humanism relies heavily on notions of the universal character of human nature. Curiously, though, as Marián Gálik has mentioned in his history of modern Chinese literary criticism, somehow "imagination," the universal key to human nature in the European conception, is inherently lacking in the Chinese (Gálik 1980: 295). How could it be that the qualities that make

文學雜誌

梁實秋 梁治華

文藝創作

文學的紀律

human nature universal are somehow lacking in the Chinese? It is this sort of problem that suggests a deeper relationship between China's epistemological differences from the West and the hegemonic struggle waged therein. This presumed universal notion is given emphatic endorsement by Liang in his essay "Wenxue de jilü" [The laws of literature]. In this essay, Liang argues that literature must embody the unchanging, universal characteristics of human nature. This is not to advance the proposition that different personalities could not be depicted in literature:

變態

What I mean when I say that literature must express the normality of human nature does not mean that literature cannot contain the subject matter of characters whose behavior is anomalous (*biantai*). We must use the most stable attitude to deal with the most aberrant forms of behavior. The most important thing in literature is the attitude of the author. (Liang 1961: 24)

According to Liang, then, this attitude of the author, and the tone which thereby permeates the literary text, is the decisive factor, not the state of the characters themselves. A character's personality can be naturalized according to the tone of the work, and that tone should always be one of high seriousness. Liang Shiqiu places himself within the neo-Classical tradition of Alexander Pope, arguing that temperance is the most important quality in creating literature. He does not feel that a measured treatment of literary themes need be restricted from the outside. Rather, Liang feels that the temperance which accompanies laws is a part of nature. Liang Shiqiu has been associated with the importation of realism into China as well, but this realist mode is not exactly tantamount to an externalized description of sensory detail as much as it is linked with this attitude of high seriousness. Realism, as Gálik has pointed out, is rooted in the notion of reason, an anti-romantic view of literature that values stability and understatement over the emotionalism of romanticism (Gálik 1980: 295; Liang 1961: 27).

The Aesthetic Model of Xia Ji'an

An awareness of Liang Shiqiu's notions of realism, temperance, and the universal category that should be expressed through literature helps one understand Xia's contribution to Chinese literary criticism in the late 1950s in Taiwan.⁴ Xia Ji'an was an important critic and editor. He played an instrumental role in encouraging young writers to devote themselves to literature, but his presence was equally vital to setting the terms by which literature would be read and assessed in Taiwan. Xia shares Liang's view that Romanticism is excessively emotional. He also shares the notion that fiction describing characters who may not exhibit "normal" behavior is permissible in literature as long as that behavior is strongly condemned by the authorial tone. The reconciliation of aberrant behavior to the universalizing vision of the author, however, becomes indeterminate in practice. What may be read as the author's tone of high seriousness may in fact be the monologic tendency of the critic to domesticate what is potentially disruptive, marginalizing, and subversive in a text's portrayal of the Chinese social order. The reception of a work follows a path of its own, quite distinct from the author and from what the author originally intended. A good example is Zhang Ailing (1920-1995), whose early 1950s fiction attracted critical attention especially due to its promotion in Xia's journal *Wenxue zazhi*. This led, in fact, to the resurrection of interest in her work of the 1940s.

張愛玲

If Xia Ji'an was the chief promoter of Chinese literature from Taiwan outside government circles in the late 1950s, he was a tough critic as well. His own assessment of the literary situation furnishes probably the best insight into his personality. Although quite dated now, the appendix he wrote to his brother C.T. Hsia's (b. 1921) *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction: 1917-*

夏志清

⁴ Interestingly, the "New Critical" method of reading literature, which view literature as "pure," beyond the realm of politics, and posits a universal essence, continues to have a powerful impact among contemporary PRC writers. Recent Nobel Laureate Gao Xingjian, for example, has repeatedly espoused these principles in defending both his work and self-imposed exile from China.

高行健

1957 is quite shocking in its outspoken dissatisfaction with what seems to be a respectable body of literature. The force and passion of his writing is probably more indicative of his views than the substance of the remarks he made at the time. His criticism seemed quite devastating:

I do not know of a single novel published in Taiwan in the last ten years that deals, seriously or humorously, with the life of peasants, workers, or the petty bourgeois class of teachers and government clerks to which the writers themselves, with few exceptions, belong. It is easy now to laugh at the naivete and wishful thinking of the leftist writers and their unobservant distortion of social reality, but having surfeited myself with a steady diet of vaporous writings, I do sometimes miss the hardness, the harshness, the fiery concern with social justice that we find in the best works of the leftist school. (Hsia 1961: 511)⁵

What sort of person would write with such disarming candor about a society of which he was considered such a partisan? It certainly was not due to any leftist political leanings of Xia's. Still, there was something iconoclastic, something critical of the status quo that pervaded his writing. There was an intensity in his view of literature that he wished to see transferred to the fiction and poetry being published in Taiwan in the late 1950s. This intensity was in part derived from his study of Western, and especially English, literature. He was clearly concerned with the problems of grafting Western techniques onto the current trends in Chinese literature. He was particularly interested in neo-Classical moral realism in the tradition of Alexander Pope, Matthew Arnold, T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis, and Lionel Trilling. This neo-Classicism was inherited from Liang Shiqiu. Xia's critical writings are chiefly concerned with charting the ambiguous aspects of humanity, the most "real" aspects in his estimate, but without forgetting the moral implications that such realistic depictions of life entail. The challenge was how to

⁵ Since C. T. Hsia felt that his brother's assessment of the Taiwan literary milieu was no longer accurate a decade after the book's first printing, he omitted these remarks from the second edition.

predicate a moral positivism upon what is essentially the terra infirma of human emotions. To this end, he adopted the practical qualities of Eliot and Leavis as propounded under the concepts of “impersonality” and “high seriousness.” In so doing, he could allow the reader to draw firm conclusions of a moral sort from what to him constituted “good” literature: not propaganda, the worst of which was in his reckoning the Communist variety, nor romantic effusion, of which he felt the literature in Taiwan during the fifties was most guilty, but realistic literature that involved the revelation of human emotion and a concurrent fidelity to shaping one’s literary craft. In other words, his ideal was a type of literature that focused on human frailty, yet did not forget its primacy as a structure that needed to be molded, polished, and revised.

The first issue of *Wenxue zazhi*, containing one of Xia’s famous short essays entitled “Zhi duzhe” [To the reader], serves as a manifesto for the periodical. Therein he states:

致讀者

We do not yet dare say whether we can make many large contributions. We hope to continue the great tradition of Chinese literature that has lasted several thousand years, and thereby carry on its glory. Though we live in a turbulent age, we hope our literature is not “turbulent.” What we are promoting is a straightforward, reasoned, and clear style. We do not want to avoid reality. It is our belief that a serious writer is certainly one who aims at reflecting and expressing his own times.

We are not promoting “art for art’s sake.” Art cannot be separated from life. Born into this moment so perilous for our people, we feel that our grief and indignation, as well as our sincere patriotism, will be second to none—no matter how strongly we wish to preserve our clear-mindedness.

We oppose the propagandistic literature of Communism. It is our opinion that although there may be good literature among works of propaganda, literature is not limited to propaganda; literature retains an eternal and indestructible value. We also oppose dilettantism and wordplay. We oppose the confusion between right and wrong and deliberate misrepresentation. We are certainly not particular about the beauty of literary style, but what we feel is more important is that we are allowed to speak the truth. (Xia 1956: 70)

樸實 理智
冷靜

Xia's theory is that literature should avoid the scylla of rabid propaganda on the one hand and the charybdis of solipsistic wordplay on the other. Literature probes the most intimate human emotions, but it does so with the surgeon's care and precision. There is no room for overstatement or swooning rhetoric. "It is not a turning loose of emotion," Eliot wrote forty years before Xia, "but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things" (Eliot 1975: 43). "Straight-forwardness" (*pushi*), "reason" (*lizhi*), and "clarity" (*lengjing*)—these are the standards that Xia repeatedly returns to in his short essays to the readership of *Wenxue zazhi*. After twelve months of publication, he reiterates his standards in a work that takes stock of what was said in the preceding year. "Our attitude can be summed up as fairly clear-headed (*lengjingde*) and reasoned (*lizhide*). We seldom publish works of untrammelled emotion" (Xia 1957b: 84).⁶ This austere view of literature is one that pervades all of Xia's literary criticism.

Like T.S. Eliot, one of Xia's most preferred methods of advancing critical principles was to take a literary work as his point of departure and develop an argument inductively. It is therefore not surprising that his most extensive single literary analysis in Chinese appears as a critique of a specific literary text: "A Critique of *Setting Moon* and Discussion of Modern Fiction."⁷ An examination of this article will reveal many things about Xia's attitude both toward literature in general and what should be published in a serious literary journal, not to mention

⁶ Xia Ji'an (September, 1957: 84). In a letter to Peng Ge (originally dated October 4, 1957) Xia writes that "maturity, sobriety" are the calling cards of *Wenxue zazhi* with both words capitalized and written in English. As for "classicism," Hsia continues, "[it] will never become a trend in China, but its promotion cannot but force literature to become a little less romantic" (Xia 1977b: 213).

⁷ Xia has written a lot about Chinese literature in English as well, but since most of this is on Left-wing writers, Lu Xun, and others, it is not relevant to explore this aspect of his career in the current undertaking. "A Critique" first appeared in 1956 and was reprinted in the 1977 Yuanjing edition.

some features about himself. This article also sheds light on Xia's attitude toward establishment intellectuals such as Peng Ge.

In his writings on Taiwan literature, Xia is concerned with the idea of creating "great" works—classics. In many articles he goes back and forth about the necessity of studying the Chinese classics as well as the great books of the Western tradition. But he inevitably returns to the question of greatness as it pertains to the contemporary situation in Taiwan. The appendix to his brother's *History* is a mere symptom of an idea that clearly haunted Xia throughout his career as an editor in Taiwan. That greatness and grandeur are always foremost in his mind may be due to Xia's belief that the tradition of Chinese literature can galvanize a contemporary individual and motivate him or her to write that crowning work of an epoch. Such a vision, as Chen Shixiang has implied, may especially be needed in light of the reduced circumstances of the inhabitants of Taiwan recently arrived from the mainland.⁸ In January of 1957, Xia solemnly urged the Nobel committee to give its prize to Hu Shi (Xia 1957a: 94). Hu Shi never received the prize, but the important thing here is to consider the salience of Xia's idea of greatness. Xia's eagerness to sound the call for "great works" of literature did much to change the face of the Taiwan literary scene in the 1950s.

Unfortunately, most of his waking hours as an editor of what was becoming the most respected literary journal in

⁸ In his introduction to *Xia Ji'an xuanji* (Xia 1971c), a posthumous collection of Xia's works of literary and cultural criticism, Chen Shixiang compares Xia to Liu Xie (c. 465-c. 520) and compares the post-1949 period with the Six Dynasties. He remarks that both these times of turmoil have led to an emergence of critical fecundity, as evidenced by the *Wenxin diaolong* [The literary mind and the carving of dragons] of ancient fame and the work of the New Critics on Chinese literature. The historical position of New Criticism in China is the same as that of Liu Xie's theories, which owe their distinction to the influence of Buddhism in China. Thus, Chen maintains, the current era, being one of weakness and cultural importation from abroad, is on an equal footing with the Six dynasties. He even led the way in the early issues of *Wenxue zazhi* with an article on Du Fu in the New Critical vein.

Taiwan were spent in careful revision of submissions that were far from great. In Xia Ji'an's own estimate they were for the most part deplorable. He revised dozens of pieces, especially short stories, to the extent, sometimes, of completely writing a character out, or erasing and rewriting the ending, changing the narrative point of view, and so on.⁹ He believed in the craft of fiction, and he was a stalwart advocate of it. Some may naturally have been angered by his uncompromising views on literary perfection, but those who have spoken have been thankful for the boost. Moreover, it was his devotion to the cause as a moral issue, and not one foremost of style, that made being Taiwan's most demanding reader an endearing figure, not a fearsome one. After all, when it comes to the question of national urgency, such as the decline of one's culture, Xia felt decorum and politeness were not appropriate. Lin Haiyin (originally Lin Hanying; b. 1918) admits to a similar experience:

林海音 林含英

瓊君
王敬義

In the first issue of *Wenxue zazhi* a short story of mine "Qiongjun" [Qiongjun], was to appear, but didn't. At that time his very good friend Wang Jingxi told me "Mr. Xia spent the whole morning revising your manuscript." As expected, when it came out, "Qiongjun" was left with one character, the rest completely eliminated. . . . If the works [I have published in *Wenxue zazhi*] are in any way readable it is thanks to Mr. Xia Ji'an because they are all vestiges of Mr. Xia's polishing and correction. (Lin Haiyin 1978: 22-23)

⁹ "Escapism being the fashion," Xia laments, "my associates and I generally have a hard time finding usable original stories among the many manuscripts we receive every month." He admits that although he cannot salvage all the stories, in one instance he says: "I saw the fictional possibilities of an apparently unhappy student escaping from the squalor of his emotionally undernourished life into the dreamland villa with his sensitive, ailing beauty. I accordingly revised the story and transformed the hero into a Chinese Walter Mitty. It was published as a satire" (Hsia 1961: 513). C.T. Hsia notes in a footnote that although the original writer was given full credit, "his story could not have emerged as a work of comic brilliance and sheer technical virtuosity, the like of which is rarely encountered even in pre-1949 Chinese fiction, without the expert and extensive rewriting of my brother. There are several stories in the extant volumes of *Wenxue zazhi* which have benefited immensely from my brother's editing" (Hsia 1961: 513).

Xia's Critique of *Setting Moon*

Xia's critique of *Setting Moon* is rich in its eclectic combination of powerful images of what fiction could be in Taiwan and of the intricate transformations that Peng Ge's story would have to undergo for it to become great literature. In a sense, it provides an aperture into the thought processes of an influential critic, known for his critical readings and penchant for revision, as he discusses what to focus more readily upon and develop, and what to extricate from the text. He begins his discussion of *Setting Moon* by pondering the notion of the great novel, which I mentioned above is a common theme in his writing. A "great" book is not necessarily a successful book or a well-written one. It is long and expansive and "reflects great times" (*fanying dashidai*). *Setting Moon*, Xia argues, could be a great novel, but right now it is a "small" novel. This is perfectly fine, since "a bad big book is nowhere as good as a good small one" (Xia 1977a: 177). Moreover, the suggestion that *Setting Moon* "could be better" allows Xia the freedom to do what he likes best—revise, suggest alternative structures, and consider how better to convey the original author's theme. Xia also indicates that greatness is not a matter of size; *Setting Moon* is a novel depicting one individual's gradual retreat first from Japanese occupied northern China, and eventually from the Communist controlled continent to Taiwan, covering vast territories and long stretches of time. But Xia notes that subject matter alone does not necessarily make a novel great. Xia does not seem to reject *Setting Moon* as a finished work of fiction, but rather looks upon it as something that has potential. It lacks the details needed for it to be called a great novel; it glosses over too much of the vast expanse within its covers. Xia first describes the structure of the novel and then shifts to his suggestions for reorganization: "The problem is: since the author has sacrificed large for small, what methods are employed? Are these useful methods? Did he get the most out of them in order to achieve the ultimate result?" (1977a: 178)

Xia focuses his attention on principal frames of narration, such as the photo album that initiates the retelling of the protagonist's last twenty-five years in a China under siege

反映大時代

評彭歌的「落月」兼論現代小說

夏濟安

中國自從文學革命以來，不知有多少有志寫作的青年，在夢想着寫一本大書。大書的標準是：反映大時代。社會輿論以此期待於我們的作者，作者也以此自勉。好像一本小說不是背景跨地數千里，人物數以千百計，故事裏面穿插着戰爭、逃難、遊行、暴動、開河、築路等等大場面，不足以盡其小說的使命。

這樣的大書，的確有人寫過。書雖大，成功則未必。世界上以歷史為經，男女戀愛為緯的小說，真正寫得好的，本來就沒有幾本。彭歌先生的落月可能成爲一本大書，現在我們所看到的只是一本小書——一本相當好的小書。假如有些批評家拿「反映大時代」這句話來讚美「落月」，我相信作者自己也要啞然失笑的。不錯，這本小說裏講起過北平、重慶、臺北等好些地方，就表面來看，故事所佔的時間也很長，整整八年抗戰都在裏面了，還有反共戰爭。但是作者對於「反映大時代」所作的努力實在不够，他對於余心梅這個女伶生命過程裏所發生的政治軍事經濟大事，似乎並不感覺到興趣。例如卓如是書中很重要的一個角色，可是關於他的「故事」，作者只用兩三行輕輕帶過。

「我們都有了不少的改變了。」卓如無限感慨地說。於是他先講他自己的故事。他怎樣離開北平，又怎樣逃到洛陽、西安、重慶、昆明那些地方去。後來他就到了國外去，在倫敦和紐約住了些時候；中間曾經一度回到過上海。（一〇九——一一〇頁）

這兩三行裏可以包含多少故事——引入多少離奇的穿插，多少動人的場面，多少有趣的人物！到了「戰爭與和平」的作者手裏，這幾行便可以發展成好幾章大文章。

但是我並不因此就對「落月」覺得不滿意。一本壞的大書，實在比不上一本好的小書。小說的「規模」，並不是小說好壞的標準。寫小說固然有法則，但是並沒有一定不易的法則。不同的小說家有不同的寫法，他有選取「規模」大小的權利。像這樣一本描寫一個女伶生活的小說，可能成爲一本傑作，儘管作者忽略好些政治經濟方面的大問題。

問題是：作者既然捨大取小，他所採用的是甚麼方法？這種方法是否可用？他是否充份的利用了這種方

(1977a: 7).¹⁰ The photo album is a very useful device, he admits, but, he states later, it could be better exploited. The individual photographs are not successfully drawn into the recollection of events. They are not used as symbols and potential touch points that would lend cohesion to the narration. In fact, once the narration is underway, this framing device is forgotten altogether. For that matter, the governing point of view, which begins with the heroine Yu Xinmei, is forgotten once the narrative is fully occupied by the events of the past. It is these sorts of failures by Peng Ge to take advantage of what he has begun that at once disappoint Xia and simultaneously fan his interest in what the novel could have been. Xia's implied message is that Peng could be more clearly concerned with greater things than the life of someone who was separated from her lover in the midst of national turmoil; Peng's overriding concern is with expressing the sorrows of national loss. Xia's point is that the narrative should focus exclusively on the intricacies of human interrelationships, geographical details, and the subtle consistency of key symbols. The novelist should be concerned with aesthetics in the sense that the novel should reward the careful reader; Xia feels that with a well-written novel the emotion felt for the loss of one's country will be more powerful. Peng Ge's novel fails as an elegy for modern China. Instead it merely encourages the habit of "lazy reading":

The lazy reader doesn't have the patience to listen to a lot of dialogue, and he doesn't have the patience to concentrate on

¹⁰ The closing line of chapter one is: "she calmly brushed the tears from her face, and opened the photo album to the first page. . . ." Xia makes the point that the next sentence, which appears at the beginning of the second chapter — "Life always begins in one's childhood, but in Yu Xinmei's recollection it seemed as if her childhood memories were an extremely remote and extremely sacred concept"—is very disappointing. Not only does it detract attention from the photographs as a concrete image, but also, more importantly, it is a superfluous statement that could only be said by an omniscient narrator. Thus the immediacy of Yu Xinmei's experience and even the immediacy of her recollection are destroyed by an expendable sentence (Xia 1977a: 187).

people's actions. It's enough for him simply to know the basic plot. He's too lazy to use his critical powers or to make judgments. He wants the novelist to make everything clear for him.

The novelist should not give in to the lazy reader. He must believe that the reader possesses a natural inclination to exercise care. The work that he has carefully produced is meant for the careful reader. . . . Because he knows that the avenues for creativity are limited if he simply uses the method of direct "telling," he will certainly not use this method, which makes everything in the story plain and simple. For example, with regard to good people and evil people: a good person can contain three parts evil, or an evil person can contain three parts good; good and bad people can change; people who are neither good nor evil may do things that are both good and evil. What should one do? It would be better if these people were allowed to show what they do to the reader. Let the reader evaluate what happened himself. Make him draw his own conclusions. (Xia 1977a: 180).

This emphasis on careful characterization demonstrates Xia's indebtedness to twentieth-century Anglo-American modernist critics such as Henry James, Percy Lubbock, and Wayne Booth. But his theory as applied to Chinese fiction involves much more than manipulating the age-old trick of "showing versus telling." He has an abiding passion to ferret out social and physical reality, and there is a strong empiricist bent to his thinking. And, ultimately, he feels that complete fidelity to the craft of realistic fiction yields positive results for the nation:

This journal is the creation of a few friends who enjoy literature. We don't expect to create a new order on the literary scene, but just to walk on firm ground, and carefully write a few good literary works. After the fall of mainland China, with the Chinese people caught in the middle of peril and extinction [sic], people on all sides need to be skillful, tenacious, and ready to do solid work. We in the field of literature intend to use all our strength, and use our writing in the service of our country. (Xia 1956: 70)

Xia's critique is more of a practical analysis of *Setting*

Moon than it is a theoretical treatise on what the modern novel is in abstract form. By progressing from problem to problem within the text, Xia gradually identifies certain priorities for a careful writer. Some techniques should be omitted and others of course added depending on the specific case; some considerations should not have to be taken, but others will crop up at particular moments. This kind of practical criticism seems to fit in well with his overall project.

Another important feature of Xia's critical preference, to which I have already alluded, is his indebtedness to Anglo-American theorists such as Henry James. Undoubtedly Xia's theory unfolds in the course of his writing what could be a preface, just as Henry James's theory of the novel, influential as it is, finds its most extended and systematic illustration only in the accumulation of many important prefaces he wrote for his own work. The difference is that James is best at explaining why he made certain stylistic choices whereas Xia's most valuable insights come from what he describes as things that are in some way lacking in the text. He stays very close to James's standard, nevertheless, in his discussion of stream-of-consciousness techniques and the psychological novel. Xia expounds on the salient aspects of the modern novel, noting that though past their prime, techniques such as James's "singular point of view" and stream-of-consciousness have been very influential:

In the twentieth century, the art of the novel took another turn. For one thing, the American novelist Henry James's method of employing "singular point of view" is now already the model for many novelists. The so-called "singular point of view" is the filtering of all the characters, deeds, and sentiments for a certain place, etc., through the perception of one person. If this person is puzzled by the things that happen around him, then the reader has no choice but to follow him in his ignorance. The author must not add any explanation, because Henry James is not interested simply in describing objective reality—he wants to describe the objective world through one's subjective consciousness.

Another thing was the abrupt rise [in the early twentieth century] of the stream-of-consciousness school of psychological fiction. With this the novel took on a new appearance. More will

be said about the technique itself in subsequent pages. For now, we can say that: stream-of-consciousness novels were most prominent during the 1920s and 1930s. Nowadays, very few people write pure stream-of-consciousness novels. Nevertheless, the structural influence of stream-of-consciousness is very powerful. (Xia 1977a: 181)

Xia then quickly transfers his general observations on this theory to the particular case of Peng Ge's novel. He is looking for techniques that would free it to do what it seems to be originally intended for. He wants to raise it to a higher level of literature:

Setting Moon should be a psychological novel, but unfortunately the author did not employ the techniques of psychological fiction. Since we cannot blame Peng Ge for not writing like Tolstoy [one of Xia's examples of a "great" writer], we similarly cannot blame him for not being able to write like Henry James or Virginia Woolf. What we want to point out is this: the techniques of the psychological novel could contribute to the success of this novel and would enable it to surpass the level of "trash reading." (Xia 1977a: 181)

In addition to considering certain technical aspects of the psychological novel and stream-of-consciousness fiction, Xia also urges that Peng Ge employ another popular Modernist technique: a poetic style. The use of this poetic style is not synonymous with writing narrative verse. By "poetic style," Xia means something more like an elliptical style. He recommends that novels rely more on suggestion, association, and inspiration. This would allow for a narrative that imitates the effects of poetry. What he is advocating is economy: One should get the most out of the words one uses. "Stories say what needs to be said," he explains, "and poems strive for an economy of diction. Each word should have a use. Storytellers need only use ordinary language to get their ideas across; in using all his creative energies, a poet can but fashion his own personal tools—his individual style" (Xia 1977a: 183).¹¹

¹¹ Xia has written another article that appeared in *Wenxue zazhi*

As Xia focuses attention on the techniques of fiction, he makes more and more general remarks about the modern novel. Although fiction can benefit from the use of ellipsis and economy, more than this is required to satisfy the structural demands of the genre. "Action" (*dongzuo*) is needed. "Action," Xia explains, "usually refers to the visible external actions, but one's thoughts also constitute action" (Xia 1977a: 184). This is one of the key problems of Peng Ge's novel. Instead of concentrating on the actions of mind and body, the authorial voice intrudes at points to embellish where embellishment is not needed. Xia criticizes the novel's unrealistic description not only of physical action, but of mental actions as well. When listening to an opera, for example, Peng Ge describes Yu Xinmei as "forgetting herself, and the hustle and bustle of her world." Xia challenges Peng Ge, arguing that "in a young girl's mind, such a 'concept' as this would never appear; 'hustle' and 'bustle' (*xixi rangrang*) is something she would not know yet" (Xia 1977a: 188-89). Xia's idea of realism is not based on an empiricist view of things. It transcends the metaphysical problems involving internal and external worlds, and instead emphasizes "reality" as a problem of structure, style, and form. Certainly, Xia does implicitly posit some notion of "world," but to investigate just what

動作

熙熙攘攘

in March, 1957, entitled "Baihua yu xinshi" [Vernacular Chinese and new poetry]. He shows a connection between "diction" (*wenzi*), "literature" (*wenxue*), and "culture" (*wenhua*). He also argues that *baihua* must not be simply employed for pragmatic purposes. Aesthetics cannot be sacrificed; otherwise poetry will be lost.

白話與新詩
文字
文學 文化

Let's not get so gleeful about the success of the vernacular movement just yet. If *baihua* has only practical value, if it has only the advantage of enabling education to spread, then the success of *baihua* is not only finite; *baihua* also falls prey to the possibility of becoming vulgarized. . . . Our present writing of poetry is an experiment to see if *baihua* can shoulder its heavy burden, if it can become beautiful language. If it cannot, then the inferiority of its diction becomes obvious; *baihua* will just be a writing tool for everyone and, therefore, the future of Chinese culture will be something serious enough for us to worry about. (Xia 1971a: 66)

Note the intimate relationship that Xia posits between the aesthetic features of *baihua* and the perseverance of Chinese culture.

constitutes that notion is beside the point. The important thing for Xia is, if there is a “world,” then describe it precisely.

It looks as if Xia Ji’an’s dissection of *Setting Moon* could go into endless details. Clearly, he could toil over every sentence and perhaps each word. He offers major suggestions for dealing with large-scale problems in the novel’s structure. He feels some of the salient images that appear early in the novel could be used to tie the novel together. I have briefly mentioned the photo album and opera. Why not, he asks, use the photo album as an architectonic device that could fix in the reader’s mind clear images of the principal characters in Yu Xinmei’s past? And for Xia, Xinmei’s recollection of her experience of going to the opera, as it first appears in the novel, could be used as a device for foreshadowing the subsequent death of her lover (Xia 1977a: 197).¹²

Xia’s Critical Legacy

There are opportunities missed by Peng Ge, but one could venture to add that they were mistakes carefully heeded by writers emerging on the Taiwan literary scene later. For example, Bai Xianyong (b. 1937) may have benefited from Xia’s advice in his symbolic deployment of Kunqu. Moreover, Xia’s pronounced distaste for sentimentalism is something that later Taiwan writers inherited as well. Xia writes,

Sentimentalism limits the novelist’s creativity; it immerses him in the imaginary world of self-revelry and neglect for real life. After reading *Setting Moon*, I feel Yu Xinmei is not real enough. Why? She is too good. Make no mistake. There are good people in the world; there are many good people in the world. But Yu Xinmei’s goodness has come about too easily. The environment an actress lives in is full of evil and alluring things. Through all time, and all over the world, this is probably the case. Perhaps Yu

白先勇
崑曲

¹² According to Xia, one of the most important symbols that Peng Ge has neglected to use is the moon. The story begins with a wonderful description of “the hushed autumn evening, like the dregs in a half-empty tea cup . . . cold, sour, desolate.” But the symbolic possibilities of this image are not exploited (Xia 1977a: 198ff).

Xinmei is besmirched by the filth into which she was born, but a good novel should not stop at describing the purity of the lotus blossom; the mud from which it grew is part of the story as well. (Xia 1977a: 208)

Another important achievement of Xia's not readily apparent from what remains of his writings is the establishment of a serious attitude toward literature in Taiwan, an attitude that he hoped would forge a closer alliance between the academic community and the writers' community. The publication of *Wenxue zazhi* was directed toward this end. This goal also made scholarly discussion of novels such as *Setting Moon*—discussion that often had been scorned by sinologists as unworthy—that much more important. I have discussed the editorial slant of this journal and taken a look at Xia's taste in literature as exemplified in the article "A Critique of *Setting Moon* and a Discussion of Modern Fiction." I will now delve into some of the deeper theoretical underpinnings of his work and explore his complex feelings toward the Chinese philosophical and literary tradition vis-à-vis the present economically superior and culturally dominant Western world.

In his article "Jiuwenhua yu xinxiaoshuo" [Ancient culture and the new novel], Xia begins with a reflection on Confucianism in contemporary China as compared with its counterpart in the West, the Judeo-Christian tradition. Why, he wonders, does the Bible wield such influence on Western literature even in modern times? Rarely does a modern literary work in Chinese embrace the philosophical tenets of Confucianism, at least in any self-conscious fashion. But if one is to write a novel, how can one give vibrancy to a system of thought? This is a question, Xia observes, of which no one seems to have taken note (Xia 1971b: 2-12).

Xia cautions against both the reactionary tendencies of Confucianism on the one hand and the propagandistic tendencies of Communism on the other. His strong preference for realism is as obvious in this essay as it is in his other works. "Over-enthusiastic writers overlook," he writes, "personality, imagination, attitude toward life, as well as lifestyle," because they are too busy building their utopian worlds. This sort of romantic fiction achieves the same result as Communist fiction,

he continues; it ends in the syrupy illusion of perfect societies that will never exist. In opposing this type of writing Xia even goes so far as to say that it is “impossible” to write “good” fiction of this sort.

Novelists need to eschew propaganda. Old ideas of morality, such as loyalty to the ruler and filiality, and new ideals of democracy are things we all are in favor of, but a novel that propagates loyalty to the ruler and filiality is as difficult to write as a novel that promulgates democracy. I fear that “difficult to write” is still not enough; I should say “impossible to write.” To be used for propaganda a novel must necessarily first establish a clear standard of good and evil. . . . If a novel clearly distinguishes between good and evil and makes black and white judgments, then it cannot be a good novel. What novelists should be interested in are areas where good and evil . . . are obscure. . . . (Xia 1971b: 5)

Xia also detects a mellowing over the decades since the May Fourth Movement. Of course much was accomplished in this literary revolution, and Xia doubtless would like to be seen as a successor to it. Nevertheless, he advocates a different approach to Confucianism. It is time now not to forget what criticisms we have made of the anachronistic elements in Confucianism, but to appreciate Confucianism for what it offers. He therefore coins the term “sympathetic criticism.” “What we wish to point out,” he states, “is that if today’s novelists embrace an attitude of ‘sympathetic criticism’ toward Confucian thought and Confucian-centered Chinese society, then they will be able to write good novels” (Xia 1971b: 4).¹³ He is not suggesting an uncritical acceptance of Confucianism, but rather an understanding of how this system of thought (as well as other principal belief systems that have influenced Chinese society) has informed our motivations and actions in the present day. Confucianism can certainly be used to judge the motivation and

¹³ Interestingly, in the first issue of *Wenxue zazhi* Xia invokes Confucius’s stylistic legacy. “Confucius is our guide in many instances, because we aspire to Confucius’s enlightened, reasonable, moral, and extremely serious but not unhumorous style” (Xia 1956: 70).

behavior of humans. The classics offer a standard for, but do not dictate, human behavior. Xia does not imply that society is perpetually locked in some dystopic malaise. He makes no suggestions as to what the possibilities are. He does assert, however, that by reading the classics, one can learn another useful thing about human nature: how difficult it is to become a good person (Xia 1971b: 6).

The twentieth century has made reassessment of the Confucian legacy an issue of some urgency. Almost half a century had elapsed between the May Fourth Movement and the time of Xia's writing. One could look back and examine in a systematic way what sort of impact Western literature and culture had exerted on China. Although that was not Xia's goal in this article, Xia's basic inclination toward pluralism allowed him to appreciate heterogeneous influences on culture and literature. To him, the impact of Western society on Chinese culture has essentially been a positive one:

The importation of Western culture has increased our self-awareness. By looking around at everyone, we acquire an enriched understanding of ourselves. This understanding is a critical understanding, but it seems that for the present those of us who write fiction do not possess enough of this critical understanding of Chinese culture.

After a few years perhaps China will become completely Westernized, but since the founding of the Republic [1911] Chinese society has retained many of its distinctive features. The Chinese people—especially the Confucian “teachers and bureaucrats” (*shidafu*) and farmers—still exhibit a strong Chinese flavor; if one is to understand their minds, their joys and sorrows, their nobility and craftiness, then novelists must pay some attention to the formation of their personality and culture. (Xia 1971b: 7)¹⁴

士大夫

¹⁴ Xia's statement on the “Confucian subject,” which includes “teachers” (*jiaoshu de*) and “bureaucrats” (*gongwuyuan*), is quite similar to his statement on writers in the appendix to *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* that I quoted above. It is precisely these “peasants, workers, . . . [and] the petty bourgeois class of teachers and government clerks to which the writers themselves belong” that he would like to see featured in good, realistic fiction.

教書的 公務員

The combined benefits of a critical understanding of the Confucian legacy and Western culture are essential to Xia's view of the novelist's work. Writers need to sharpen their powers of observation, and in so doing they will realize that the strong influence of both the Chinese tradition and the West is unavoidable. This mixture of West and East, old and new, that will free the novelist to write realistically about the interactions of real people in society.

白先勇

Once again it is evident that Xia's ideas were influential on later developments among young writers such as Bai Xianyong. Could Bai's facility both with traditional Chinese literary tropes and with Modernist techniques have developed without the nurturing of Xia? This is not an easily answered question. Suffice it to say that, as a teacher of Bai and many other prominent writers of the next generation, Xia's influence may have been inestimable. As Si Jian has summed it up in a 1969 review of the accomplishments of *Wenxue zazhi*:

思兼

Many of the names now active in the literary world, like Yu Lihua, Nie Hualing, Ye Shan, Ya Xian, Zhuang Xinzheng, Cong Shu, Ye Weilian, Jin Hengjie, Liu Shaoming, Chen Ruoxi, Dai Tian, Bai Xianyong, Wang Wenxing, Ouyang Zi, and more, were all either writers for *Wenxue zazhi* at that time or students under Xia's direction. These people haven't achieved much yet, but they are still young, and their potential is limitless. (Si Jian 1975: 73-84)

Si Jian's statement is now obsolete. The people he has named have participated in one of the most important movements in modern Chinese literature.

Xia Ji'an's accomplishments during his short lifetime are still felt today. Although he was not satisfied with all of the writing that went into *Wenxue zazhi* some forty years ago and although he demanded much from both the writers who submitted their work and the journal's readership, I doubt that he was simply an uncompromising perfectionist. I think he would at least have been pleased to know that, due perhaps to his unrelenting yet "sympathetic" criticism, the literature created in his wake has been superlative. His accomplishments were manifold. As a critic he incessantly demanded that authors depict real people and real events. As a teacher he asked that his students bring a

seriousness to modern literature that most teachers of earlier generations scorned. And as an editor he assembled the best writers and works available in Taiwan after the Communist takeover of 1949.

Within the context of Chinese literature from Taiwan, Xia has played a pivotal role. He replaced Zhang Daofan as the dominant cultural figure in Taiwan in the late 1950s. He reconfigured the structure of power in the cultural sphere by creating an autonomous space within which writers could be promoted. In this sense, Xia is an important figure in developing a counterhegemony to those in the cultural wing of the government on Taiwan who had dominated the literary scene for the better part of the 1950s. The next generation, the "Modernists" and "Nativist" writers, would extend this autonomy, but it was Xia who initiated the process. With respect to the vision of China and the relation it bears to Taiwan, one could not argue that he altered significantly the view of establishment critics such as Zhang Daofan. In this regard, Xia was still a member of Zhang's generation, the "mainlanders" who were still heavily invested in the vision of a Chinese nation-state that included Taiwan. But in terms of the technique and manner in which the image of "China" would be invoked in literature, Xia did begin a new trend in literature. His familiarity with Western literary techniques and conventions, manifested in several articles, including the one I have quoted extensively from above, indicates a more pronounced desire to graft Western literary modes onto modern Chinese literature than the establishment critics. This sort of gesture is very common in postcolonial literature all over the world. Xia's work is proof that the influence of Western discourse, to the extent that an ideology such as realism could be so completely valorized, has been extremely pervasive. His arguments provide the best post-1949 example in the Chinese context of just how influential Western literary trends can be.

REFERENCES

- ELIOT, T. S. 1975 [1919]. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." In *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich.
- "Foreign News: Formosa." 1956. *Time* (January 16): 34-36.
- GÁLIK, Marián. 1980. *The Genesis of Modern Chinese Literary Criticism*. London: Curzon Press.
- HSIA, C. T. 夏志清. 1961. *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction: 1917-1957*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- HSIA, T. A. See Xia Ji'an.
- LI Jing 李經. 1956. "Literary Criticism with a Five Star Hat On." *Ziyou Zhongguo* 14.4. February 16.
- LIANG Shiqiu 梁實秋. 1961. "Wenxue de jilü" 文學的紀律 [The laws of literature]. Originally published in *Xinyue* 新月 [Crescent moon]. Rpt. in *Liang Shiqiu wenxueji* 梁實秋文學集 [Collected literary writings of Liang Shiqiu]. Taipei: Xinlu shuju.
- LIN Haiyin 林海音. 1978. "Xiaoshuojia yingyou guangda de tongqin" 小說家應有廣大的同情 [Fiction writers should have deep empathy]. Originally published in *Wenxing* 文星 [Literary star] 90 (March, 1965). Reprinted in *Xia Ji'an xiansheng jinianji* 夏濟安先生紀念集 [Collected essays in remembrance of Mr. Xia Ji'an]. Hong Kong: Xiandai chubanshe. 22-23.
- LUPKE, Christopher. 1993. "Modern Chinese Literature in the Postcolonial Diaspora." Ph.D. dissertation. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.
- PENG Ge 彭歌. 1977. *Luoyue* 落月 [Setting moon]. Originally serialized in *Ziyou Zhongguo* (January 16, 1956 to June 1, 1956). Taipei: Yuanjing chubanshe.
- SI Jian 思兼. 1975. "Huainian wenxue zazhi" 懷念《文學雜誌》 [Remembering *Wenxue zazhi*]. In *Shuping yu wenping* 書評與文評 [Reviews and criticism]. Taipei: Shuping yu shumu chubanshe.
- XIA, Ji'an 夏濟安. 1956. "Zhi duzhe" 致讀者 [To the reader]. *Wenxue zazhi* 文學雜誌 [Literary review] 1.1 (September).
- . 1957a. "Zhi duzhe." *Wenxue zazhi* 1.5 (January).
- . 1957b. "Zhi duzhe." *Wenxue zazhi* 3.1 (September).
- . 1961. "Appendix: Taiwan." In C. T. Hsia 1961: 509-29.

- 1971a. "Baihua yu xinshi" 白話與新詩 [Vernacular Chinese and new poetry]. Originally published in *Wenxue zazhi* 2.1 (March, 1957). Reprinted in Xia 1971c.
- 1971b. "Jiuwenhua yu xin xiaoshuo" 舊文化與新小說 [Ancient culture and new fiction]. Originally published in *Wenxue zazhi* 3.1 (September, 1957). Reprinted in Xia 1971c.
- 1971c. *Xia Ji'an xuanji* 夏濟安選集 [The selected works of Xia Ji'an]. Ed. Chen Shixiang 陳世驥. Taipei: Xinchao congshu.
- 1977a. "Ping Luoyue jian lun xiandai xiaoshuo" 評《落月》兼論現代小說 [A critique of *Setting Moon* and a discussion of modern fiction]. Originally published in *Wenxue zazhi* 1.2 (October, 1956), and reprinted as Appendix One in Peng Ge 1977.
- 1977b. "Xia Ji'an de sifeng xin" 夏濟安的四封信 [Four of Xia Ji'an's letters]. Appendix Two of Peng Ge 1977.