Modernism and Journalism in the Works of Chang Hsin-hsin

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Journalism and literature are generally separate writing traditions. In English, "journalism" can be an epithet for nonfiction that fails to meet the standards of good biography, history, or social science. The implication is that journalism by nature is quickly produced and forgotten: literally ephemeral, and properly so. Reportage is in any case a variety of short nonfiction, whereas in the West in the last two centuries, the dominant literary forms have been imaginative, with full-length fiction in first place.

In the 1960's, however, the barriers between the genres came down. Our age of modernism and post-modernism has countenanced the mixing of fiction and nonfiction, and even of journalism and the novel, as in the works of Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, and E. L. Doctorow. Moreover, some critics have embraced the broadcast journalist Studs Terkel and the social scientist Oscar Lewis, who lack the literary pretensions of Mailer and Capote, as practitioners of "journalistic tape-recorded novels."[1] That, too, is a heritage of modernism. The tape recorder is a unique new tool for capturing reality and allowing new kinds of textual constructions. Modernism as such values the mixing of media and voices, and the disjointed, very immediate, representation of consciousness that results from it.

In China, journalism and literature have cross-fertilized each other somewhat more, due to traditionally different ways of looking at genres and other historical factors. Though highly developed in China, the novel (indeed any genre that was *hsü* 虛, the product of imagination) was poorly regarded. Yet poetry was esteemed; so were belles-lettres, an expressive tradition that long before modern times combined the subjectivism of fiction with the observational powers of nonfiction. Hence Chinese literature was, in Western terms, "creative" without stressing narrative invention.

Modern Chinese fiction and serious nonfiction vernacular writing, on

the other hand, arose abruptly during the early twentieth century – later, really, than Chinese journalism, which was an out-and-out foreign import. Partly because of the Western impact and the twentieth-century reversal of values that sent Classical Chinese (but not all traditional literary forms and values) into decline, Chinese journalism, modern fiction, and the vernacular developed and rose in prestige together.

Liang Ch'i-ch'ao 梁啓超, China's preeminent writer and thinker at the turn of the century, epitomized the potential unity of journalism and fiction. He was, foremost, a great journalist, the reformer who unwittingly made China ripe for revolution. It was also he who first "elevated" fiction – vernacular fiction – to the important (if utilitarian) role of reforming politics and social values, an idea that defines the role and status of literature in mainland China even today. As a popularizer of semi-vernacular style, Liang even presaged the literary revolution of the 1920's. It remained for the May Fourth generation to make new fiction truly literary.

Leo Ou-fan Lee and I in our separate research have found roots for the early creativity of even Lu Hsun 魯迅 and Shen Ts'ung-wen 沈從文 in Chinese tradition – in the belles-lettres sensibility that was lyrical without being "fictive."[2] Of still more impact was the way in which those two authors' more radical sparring partners gave short shrift to imagination. Reductionist realists that they were, the orthodox leftists of the thirties adopted the journalistic practice of going out to factories and villages to gather "materials." Often enough their creativity was focused more on that than on the act of writing itself. Meanwhile, real journalists had literary pretensions, though many of them wrote popular subliterature of the sort that serious writers considered to be offensive and dangerous competition.

The Sino-Japanese War further blurred the boundaries between journalism and literature, even as both mixed truth-seeking with propaganda. In the 1930's, *tsa-kan* 雜感 (essays, which were sometimes journalistic) flourished, as did the mixed genre of travelogue. The latter often told of the Chinese West, the place of wartime exile (hence the "Western literature" now popular in mainland China has a precedent). Special-feature journalism got a boost, too, as patriotic young intellectuals flocked to the war zones to write accounts of guerrilla warfare. Even the avant-garde poet Ho Ch'i-fang 何其芳 wrote notable reportage. Meanwhile, fiction likewise focused on resistance to Japan, until it seemed little different from journalism (Liang Shih-ch'iu 梁實秋 spoke of a "Resistance-War Eight-Legged-Essay" 抗戰八股 style).

But the future pointed to greater professionalization and control of journalism and literature under separate regimens. (Things developed differently in Taiwan, but the flourishing of reportage there is a separate story.) Onetime creative writer Hsiao Ch'ien's 蕭乾 newly published memoirs illustrate how hard it was for him to rejoin the writing profession under the new post-1949 Communist bureaucracy once he was tagged as a journalist and foreign languages expert. On finally regaining his status as a writer, he discovered that he had entered a higher profile and higher risk profession. It quickly led to his professional demise, under the charge of being a Rightist.[3]

And yet, come the early 1980's, China's most famous "writer" (and one whose peers in 1985 elected him to be a vice-chairman of the Chinese Writers' Association) was the journalist Liu Pin-yen 劉賓雁. Fiction and reportage seemed to have converged again, for several reasons. First, perhaps, was the example of Liu himself. Outspoken and truthful when others were inclined to timidity and parroting the party line, Liu boosted the reputation of journalism single-handedly. Second, Chinese reportage had already absorbed much of the narrative technique of fiction (largely from Soviet models, Rudolf Wagner suggests).[4] Third, fiction and reportage experienced simultaneous and parallel revivals in the late 1970's. Both had a newly appointed, very political mission, of exposing political injustices during the previous ten years. Hence both dug up new information through investigation and personal reminiscences. They emphasized subject matter at the expense of technique (*chu-t'i hsien hsing* 主題先行), like all post-1949 Chinese writing, and yet, by the time their dissidence was reined in again by the authorities in 1980 for having outlived its usefulness, both genres had already proceeded to a larger search for truth in counterpoise to the fabrications of bureaucratic government. Both genres also broadened their technical repertory, to pull abreast of international standards (*tsou hsiang shih-chieh* 走向世界, as the mid-1980's phrase has it).

Under the banner of *chi-shih wen-hsüeh* (紀實文學 documentary literature) then, journalists of the mid-eighties fervently sought to be identified with the prestigious creative writers as fellow litterateurs. Their journalism was, they felt, intellectually deep and socially courageous (certainly Liu Pin-yen's was the latter), a tool for probing forbidden zones just like fiction. Journalism could be literary in form and style; it could even have characters. Journalism and fiction made common cause to such an extent that Hu Yao-pang intervened, in his famous February 1985 speech

"On the Party's Journalism Work," to warn journalists not to parrot the new slogan of literature and art: "complete freedom of creation."[5] As in Hsiao Ch'ien's day, the creative writers would be allowed more rope – perhaps enough to hang themselves – while journalists would continue under stricter discipline. Even so, Liu Pin-yen et al. remained outspoken, until the new heavy weather of 1987 damped down both journalists and creative writers – together.

This essay treats the intertwining of creative writing and journalism in the works of Chang Hsin-hsin (author prefers Zhang Xinxin 張辛欣). The general literary history so far described has some bearing on her case. She has of course read Liu Pin-yen; she considered putting him into the monumental "oral history reportage" book she co-authored with Sang Yeh 桑曄, *Pei-ching-jen* (*Peking Man* 北京人; a satirical title referring to the Chinese people, including the Taiwanese – all descendants of the *Homo erectus* who lived near Chou-k'ou-tien).[6] A comparative perspective well illuminates Chang Hsin-hsin's mixture of journalism and the novel, for *Peking Man* was quite directly modeled after Studs Terkel's *American Dreams.* On the other hand, Chang Hsin-hsin was already drawn to mixed genres. Like Mailer and Doctorow, she may have had an affinity for journalism because she was a modernist. Again, a comparative perspective is necessary – for few Chinese purveyors of reportage are drawn to modernism – certainly not the great Liu Pin-yen.

Two concrete factors lend special interest to this inquiry: matters of timing and, inevitably, of politics. Chang Hsin-hsin suddenly turned to outright journalism in 1984. Readers who were familiar with her prior role as an avant-garde fictionalist and inclined to see modernism and journalism as two opposite practices, signifying daring imagination and literalistic documentation respectively, were startled and even dismayed at "the change." Chang Hsin-hsin's own explanation was that she was taking a new direction that brought her closer to the people.[7] As Helmut Martin and Carolyn Wakeman first pointed out, she was forced to reconsider her career because her fiction was so harshly criticized during the campaign against "spiritual pollution" in late 1983-early 1984. She did not publish in the year 1984, and that was not by choice. Wakeman and Martin believe that the massive assault on Chang as a fiction writer reoriented her.[8] No doubt nonfiction (and, it seems to me, use of the tape recorder as back-up) offered her more security. Li Hui 李輝, cultural editor of the *Peking Evening News* 北京晚報, noticed the change, too, and said that others feared

Chang was "retrogressing." Li even worried that her use of nonfiction genres might be an "assault" on invention in literature.[9]

Martin and Wakeman convincingly show that Chang's turn to journalism could not have been entirely "natural." From the reaction of Li Hui and his friends, it is also clear that, despite all the crossings of the boundary, journalism and fiction remain separate practices in China. In this essay, however, I hope to show that Chang Hsin-hsin's turn to journalism *was* to some extent natural for her – in view of her previous writing, and because of resonances (not simply tensions) that can exist between modernism and journalism.

Chang Hsin-hsin the Young Modernist

Chang Hsin-hsin's credentials as a modernist are easily established, although her avant-garde tendencies are probably best viewed as but one manifestation of her general zest to try new things. Her modernism has been excessively "established" by doctrinaire anti-modernists in China, whose testimony is perforce worth less than nothing.[10] But what constitutes "modernism" is controversial in the West, too. Rather than try to strike out on new ground with a definition of my own, I shall simply refer to three tendencies that are generally linked to the era of "modernism" in literature. They include, most obviously, new, "modernist" techniques of writing. Then there is modernist consciousness, traced by intellectual historians to the nineteenth century: the consciousness that is informed by Nietzsche, Darwin, Marx, and Freud – in sum, the mental world we have inhabited since the "Death of God." Thirdly, and more controversially, there is, in some literary works, a further development of "modernist" consciousness in the direction of anomie and confusion regarding passage of time, the perception and apprehension of reality, and moral values. The latter may reflect social developments, as the Marxists claim, but perhaps not – we might analyze it as "merely" a further development of technique, with no implications in the realm of "world view." Because of China's recent isolation, when we see any of these tendencies in Chang Hsin-hsin's work, we may call them modernist proclivities, I believe, without getting into the question of what is the crux of modernism, or whether the many tendencies of the vast movement are indissolubly linked and must be taken whole.[11]

From childhood, Chang benefited from her great natural gifts and

voracious and unrestricted reading at home (her father is a high Peking military cadre and writer). In third or fourth grade she was already reading translations of Russian and Soviet fiction. Browsing in China's many pre-Cultural Revolution literary magazines, she found herself inadvertently attracted to "poisonous weeds" like those now republished under the title *Ch'ung-fang ti hsien-hua* or *Fragrant Flowers Reblooming* (重放的鮮花; that even these relatively daring pieces were not beyond the grasp of a ten-year-old, however precocious, perhaps says as much about the literature of the era as about Chang). Soon she was tackling *Water Margin, The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, The Dream of the Red Chamber,* and so forth. Her family did not burn its books during the Cultural Revolution, so, confined to home by illness through most of the 1970's, Chang Hsin-hsin read them out of the trunks in which they are hidden: everything from the Brontes to the Chou philosophers and Han historians. She tried to acquire the high school and college education that the social disorders denied her. Her dedication to discovering new things was established. But she would come into contact with the international avant-garde only in the post-Mao era.[12]

Chang Hsin-hsin published as early as 1976 and even penned some little stories in childhood.[13] Thus creative writing was in a sense her first calling. Today, ironically, it is technically only a "sideline" for her; her profession is directing the Peking People's Art Theater北京人民藝術劇院. That may be one of the secrets of her success. It keeps her current with new trends in international creativity, letting her examine, adapt, and stage new dramatic works without feeling pressure to produce copy for literary journals (her motivation for writing must come from within); it lifts her out of the stultifying status of "professional writer," while giving her contact not only with fictionalists but with Peking's lively theater world; and it gives her special insights into both characterization and audience response. It is Chang Hsin-hsin's interest in theater that opened up windows on avant-garde drama for her, as is apparent in her works about young theater people. She was trained at the Central Drama Academy, 1979-83, and has acted in a few roles herself. Chang learned, for instance, of Brecht and Stanislavsky. Freud was reprinted in China only in 1985, but Brecht and Stanislavsky communicated many concepts of Western psychology to her in Freud's stead.[14]

Yet, these are only a few highlights in Chang Hsin-hsin's multifaceted background. To Wakeman she has stressed her 1969 rustication in the

Great Northern Wilderness as a major influence shaping her outlook on life.[15] Anyone who has experienced Chang's ironic demeanor and roguish humor can easily imagine that the anomalies of that period did indeed allow her early on to "see through" the innocent and not so innocent false fronts of contemporary life. After that, she joined the army, worked as a nurse, married an artist who loved her only for her residence permit, and got divorced. Chang Hsin-hsin, a young woman of Peking, has seen a lot. The only notable asset she lacks for perpetual self-education is foreign languages.

Chang Hsin-hsin came to prominence with her 1981 novella "Tsai t'ung-i ti-p'ing hsien-shang" (*On The Same Horizon* 在同一地平線上), a tale about a young woman disillusioned by her marriage that many readers have taken to be autobiographical. The narrative style of the piece is complex and "plotless" by Chinese standards of the time – full of flashbacks, shifting points of view, and "streams of consciousness." More prominent to its readers, though, was the sense of estrangement and lack of clear bearings it seemed to communicate. It could thus be understood within a well-defined (though newly established) category of "young people's writing": as a work of youth alienation, indeed feminist youth alienation. Chang's head-on challenge to ideology (her "negativism") was self-evidently wrong to the society-affirming and philosophically positivist Marxists, with no need for subtle analysis of her literary style. With hindsight, though, we nonpositivists can see in her alienated consciousness a constructive spiritual affinity for modernism.[16]

By 1983, Chang Hsin-hsin could legitimately be called modernist not just in spirit but in technique. She must have realized, after the shrill criticisms of "obscure poetry," that conservatives found new technique offensive just for being difficult, regardless of the work's content or spirit. She forged ahead anyway. Of particular interest are the stories she set within the acting profession. "Chü-ch'ang hsiao-kuo" (Theatrical effects 劇場效果; January 1983) explores role-playing and the relationship between art and life.[17]

The action in "Theatrical Effects" is mostly refracted through the consciousness of one protagonist, a young actor fresh out of drama school. He has difficulty adapting to his first job, for nothing in the real world of pleasing an audience is quite like what he was led to expect in the academy. He was never an A-student to begin with. As luck would have it, though, he finds himself in a lead role, responsible for pleasing not only general audiences but two old cadres who will decide whether or not his

troupe can go on tour. He wants to perform well in another role, too. Having fallen in love with a young actress, he wants to impress her, both personally and professionally. At times he daydreams about playing lovers' parts before her – Romeo to her Juliet. Unfortunately, his best role heretofore has been that of Molière's miser, Harpagon!

The story is modernist in several respects. It is mostly narrated in mixed direct and indirect monologue, with abrupt, unexplained, occasionally difficult, changes in mood and narrative mode. It probes the young man's psyche, alternating between evidently unconscious and conscious thoughts – some of which are lines from plays that keep flitting through his mind. Less tangible recurring Proustian sensations also enter his consciousness. Finally, the story is framed by paradoxical opening and ending passages, wherein the boy with great difficulty tries on a mask, both literally and figuratively. This frame implies that the body of the story is a memory or fantasy of his. Or, perhaps, the main plot was "acting," whereas the putting on of a mask is real. Some of the language is obscure, too, because of unstated sentence subjects and so forth. The following passage, describing the young man's experience of the joy of acting, illustrates the complexity and ambiguity of Chang's prose.

> It was like being a horse just unbridled, freed from drawing its wagon. First it took short, faltering steps, then began to frolic, whinny, and finally gallop off in a frenzy. A fear of getting lost faintly flashed through his mind. That was left over from habit. Listen to the laughter below. How many diaphragms and bellies must there be, quivering up and down, obedient to your will. Keep laughing. Laugh again. No longer was his heart a horse, but rather a headstrong wind, picking up dust and whipping it up violently into a swirl. Laugh, laugh again. Amid the whistling wind and dust, his heart yelled out at him. So this is what acting is all about. Let yourself go. Laugh. Swirl. From up on high he looked down, far, far below at his sacred temple of art. So tiny. Oh, drama school, you poor fool. Four years of notebooks – what possible use? Rip them up, page by page, tear them into little tiny pieces, let them float away, trample them underfoot. He did a headstand on them, blew his nose on them, rolled across and urinated on them.[18]

"Theatrical Effects" has comic moments, too. It satirizes propaganda plays about the one-child policy, and ridicules the whole 1983 drama world, which was then suddenly becoming commercialized. Here we see the young man having a look around when he first comes into town.

> Just then they were busy putting snakes on display in this provincial capital. Three modern drama troupes – a provincial one, one belonging to the municipality, and a third from an outside city – were in competition, to see who could best perform *The Strange Case of the Beautiful She-Snake.* The rival billboard ads were each more marvelous than the next, but they had one thing in common. Though the male role, the good guy, was the lead, the Mata Hari was painted bigger and more alluring. The poster for the non-local troupe added: Kissing Right on Stage.[19]

There are even comic characters: the ancient cadres, the actor-protagonist (who acts foolish in front of the woman he loves and is caught by a policeman reciting lines from *The Miser* to a tree trunk), and, above all, a troupe director who twists the "sacred" drama-school concept of "theatrical effect" (said to be from Stanislavsky) until it means just getting audience laughs by any gimmick available. It is disillusioning – truly, enough to make one wonder if life is just play-acting.

For all her interest in psychology and the meaning of life, then, Chang Hsin-hsin stayed concerned with current events and did not mind ruffling feathers to show it. A further example of that is her "Feng-k'uang ti chün-tzu-lan" (Orchid madness 瘋狂的君子蘭). This, too, is a story criticizing commercialism. To pin a label on it, it is a criticism of sideline economic activities going out of control. Hence the work was terribly out of phase with government policy when Chang wrote it, in July 1983, though she is not, of course, a Maoist or conservative advocate of central state planning. She describes a whole city that goes off its rocker in its zest to grow, and sell for profit, a rare variety of orchid that prospers particularly well in the local climate. Everybody wants in on the action:

> Young people awaiting employment pushed cartload after carload of the *chün-tzu* orchids. The flowers were reserved-looking, but the passion with which they were hawked had overtones of incitement. Other peddlers, of about the same age and dress

> but looking somewhat more indolent, were young workers on leave from various units. Their bosses couldn't stand them, so they'd launched them onto the market to compete with the unemployed. Soldiers were selling the flowers, too. The ones with baggy pants and two-pocket jackets were fighting men on official duty – noncombat duty, that is. They looked as serious and conscientious when taking your money as when they were on parade. The prices of the orchids varied – 50, 100, 1,000, maybe 2,000. Depended on quality. Of course the choicest items didn't change hands right out there in the open.[20]

Professionals above all, even doctors, desert their real work in order to make big profits. So far, this is conventional satire, but then the tale turns into Chang Hsin-hsin's most obviously modernist piece. In what she admits is a variation on Ionesco's play *Rhinoceros,*[21] her rapacious townspeople turn into *chün-tzu* 君子 orchids themselves. The hero, a last hold-out from commercialization as he watches his friends and neighbors succumb, is next in line to be transformed. The metamorphoses finally turn out to be just a dream – or was the harder commercial "reality" the dream?

Yet, this journey into the Absurd (and perhaps the Butterfly Dream of Chuang-tzu) is based on life – on a story Chang Hsin-hsin heard from a friend, about how people in China's Northeast truly were caught up in a frenzy growing and selling *chün-tzu* orchids (the seemingly satiric name, "Confucian gentlemen" or "self-cultivationist" orchid, is the actual name of the flower). No one changed into a flower, but some did commit murder to acquire the orchids, and cadres were corrupted too – a facet even Chang Hsin-hsin did not mention. "Orchid Madness" is thus a news story transformed into avant-garde fiction. The press did take notice of the commercial fad, and Chang's own piece begins with a quasi-documentary touch, by quoting from a public notice and citing putative media reports.[22]

Chang Hsin-hsin and the Mixing of Genres

During the 1983-84 campaign against "spiritual pollution," free-thinking young people's anomie came under attack again, and this time the syndrome of a so-called "school of modernism" (*hsien-tai-p'ai* 現代派) was mined for sundry unhealthy authors and tendencies that were soon used in

guilt-by-association attacks. Chang Hsin-hsin was criticized for the disillusioned thinking of her early youthful characters, for some of her criticisms of society, and for her modernist outlook. Some critics attributed nearly all her "shortcomings" to influence from the Western "school of modernism."

Chang Hsin-hsin was denied a job and even her drama school diploma (for a year); meanwhile her stories were literally seized off the printing presses.[23] She was of course very depressed, and may even have taken some of the criticisms to heart. Since her professional life collapsed, she began (in 1984, after writing her detective novel) to worry that her own imagination was "deteriorating." "Thereupon," she says, she and Sang Yeh began working on *Peking Man*.[24] Then, still in 1984, she wrote "Hui lao chia" 回老家 (*Back Home*), a subjective nonfiction account of her trip to her father's ancestral place. The piece has much in common with reportage, though Chang prefers to think of it as an extended essay, and her publisher, Wang Meng (then editor of *People's Literature*), wanted to publish it as fiction, so that it might be considered for a prize in that category.[25] Due to some combination of inner and outer factors, then – Wakeman's and Martin's stress on political determinants is upheld in any case by the fact that the inner factors were severely conditioned by the "outer" ones – Chang Hsin-hsin turned toward journalism. And yet, I would argue, this was not such a repudiation of her earlier practice as it might seem. Her fiction had long adhered to real life: from her outwardly autobiographical early works; to modernist pieces like "Theatrical Effects," which remain autobiographical in a more abstract sense and contain satire of current events; to the Absurdist piece "Orchid Madness," which is explicitly topical. Above all, the journalistic *Peking Man* has much in common technically with Chang's fiction, even her modernist fiction. Chang Hsin-hsin is a child of our age. Besides trying out new techniques of both writing and observing, she crosses genre boundaries without inhibition.

Feng p'ien lien (Envelope, postcard, block-of-four 囡口田〔封片連〕) exemplifies that last tendency.[26] It is a "serious," indeed a modernist detective novel, with more than a whiff of journalism, too – s step toward *Peking Man*. Though the occasion is simply the theft of a rare postage stamp, the novel enters the realm of the extraordinary from the start. Its title is written not in Chinese, or in any language, but in unfamiliar postal symbols. We must take the author's word for it that they mean "envelope," "postcard," and "block-of-four."[27] The missing stamp is fantastic, too. It is "The Great Train Robbery Issue," said to date from 1923, when *t'u-fei*

(highwaymen 土匪) hijacked a train in Shantung and held all its foreign and Chinese passengers for ransom. To communicate with the outside world, the hostages posted letters with homemade postage stamps, some allegedly reading "Bandit Post." The great train robbery actually took place, and Chang Hsin-hsin names real historical figures, like Carl Crow, but the marvelous story about the stamp is fictitious. Ironical Chang Hsin-hsin has used history to have some fun with us, her credulous readers.[28]

Now, the combination of high and low literature is as much a product of the modern era as the combination of journalism and the novel. In the West, serious writers have long disdained formula fiction, and Western mystery fiction is, to be sure, mostly formulaic. Works not adhering to the narrow "classical" or "Anglo-American" tradition of Poe, Conan Doyle, and Agatha Christie have stayed within other formulaic bounds, as in the "tough-guy" genre of Hammett and Chandler. Rarely have Western detective stories sought the deeper meanings of high literature – until the impact of modernism. Then, in the age of experimentation, genre distinctions dissolved. From the pens of Jorge Luis Borges and Umberto Eco came metaphysical detective fiction.

In China, writers of high literature disdain popular literature even more than in the West, and have done so continuously since serious modern fiction was born in 1918. One genre of post-Mao detective fiction simply imitates the Western classical formula. There is another formula, which has a social interest, tough-guy heroism, and Sinified heroes evidently inherited from the Judge Pao tradition as well as socialist realism, but that genre is not much esteemed either. Anyway Chang Hsin-hsin has, as usual, borrowed more from the more Western formula. In *Envelope* she creates a very "interesting" gallery of equally guilty-looking suspects. At one point she even gathers them all together in one room, like Agatha Christie. Christie and Edgar Allan Poe are mentioned in the novel. There is a chase, which might seem to break the old classical formula, except that the pursuer is not a tough guy but a little girl. Chang's plot is particularly Westernized in that her detectives are amateurs, not police. Startlingly, the characters even admit that they fear the police.[29]

How *Envelope, Postcard, Block-of-Four* fits into Chang Hsin-hsin's own creative history is ambiguous. She wrote it in a fit of passion and euphoria, but completed the first draft on June 1, 1984, when she ought to have been in the depths of despair. (I gather that she may have started the manuscript in 1983, before the outer disasters struck;[30] because of them,

neither *Envelope* nor *Peking Man* could be published in China until 1985.) *Envelope* earned Chang criticism (as *Peking Man* would, the next year) as a misuse of her talent for "real" (high) literature (or "pure literature," *ch'un wen-hsüeh* 純文學). But Chang was not prejudiced against popular fiction, so she enjoyed writing *Envelope* immensely.[31] At this time in her life she wanted not only to "learn from the masses," but to *communicate* stories to them.[32] Detective fiction was popular enough to suit that goal. In the same spirit, Chang would try documentary journalism, film, and even television. Popular genres extended the "broadcasting range" of her fiction almost as television extended the audience for her work in drama. She recalled a statement by Beckett to the effect that if people understood his plays, the works were failures.[33] It was not that she no longer valued the many-layered meanings inherent in "difficulty"; but she wanted to reach *audiences*, too. Like the actor in "Theatrical Effects," sometimes she really enjoyed moving them – even making them laugh.

In fact, Chang Hsin-hsin was not taking a vacation from literature, or even experimentation. *Envelope* is, to begin with, a comedy of manners. Some critics have thus characterized the Anglo-American formula itself. It creates a world of detail and clues, one so rich in information and local color that many aficionados claim allegiance to it because they like to "learn how the world works." Chang Hsin-hsin thus paints social panoramas, as of a stamp exchange and a corner where retired people meet. These set pieces showcase her satiric abilities, for, as in "Orchid Madness," every other sentence contains a metaphor with a comic or ironic bite. And her senior citizens rattle on endlessly, repeating themselves and talking such nonsense as to make one feel embarrassed for them. The major tracts of "information," though, are *Envelope's* thumbnail essays on philatelic history, mini-lectures on anomalies that render stamps valuable, and pointed observations about classes of collectors. Chang Hsin-hsin dispenses so much knowledge that I am reminded of the old Chinese scholarly novels that C. T. Hsia feels were vehicles for the display of erudition.[34] Stamp-collecting is not really exotic in China, but clearly it seems so to Chang Hsin-hsin.

Chang's characterization is finely drawn, too. *Envelope* details the lives, personalities, and driving ambitions of all the suspects, not just the means and motives they possess for stealing a precious stamp. Unfortunately all this character development, while giving *Envelope* excellences "beyond" the formula, attenuates its sine qua non: suspense.

Modernistic technique provides the other "serious" element. *Envelope*

is related in unconnected cinematic segments; much of the logic of the plot is left to be filled in by the reader. We see a suspect walking down the street to the stamp market, looking over his shoulder. Cut. A little girl and a market guard are chasing another man. Cut. We're in the man's apartment, which is crammed to the rafters with expensive consumer goods. "How much do you want?" he asks, evidently offering to pay hush money. Cut. Now he's in another locale, asking again, "How much do you want? No, I don't have the stamp. I wanted to buy it from *you*." Cut. Old people are reminiscing. A suspect tries to get a retired railway worker to tell about the stamp. But the stamp he describes is completely different from the one that other people think they know about. Cut. The reader must put the pieces together – must deduce not only who did it, but what has been done.

Because there is no authoritative voice, there is confusion as to whether the stamp ever existed. At that, the plot becomes "metaphysical" and the quest Absurd. The international philatelic community itself has two different versions of how the stamps came into being, and what they look like. One version says that Carl Crow and a friend printed bilingual stamps, and that two survive, in the hands of a Japanese collector. Yet the local Chinese stamp-collecting club has printed up facsimiles "for the enjoyment of its members" of a completely different Great Train Robbery Stamp. People complicate the situation by selling these counterfeits. But was the original real? Ultimately the story focuses on an old man who claims to have been a hostage in the robbery and manufactured the only true Great Train Robbery Stamp, with a dragon cut from stationery. That is yet a third idea of the stamp; the man possesses it still today – until it is stolen, by his "Anhwei housemaid." She is so ignorant that she steals and mutilates all his stamps, to make a little picture gallery for herself. She sends the dragon on the one-of-a-kind stamp home, for use as an embroidery design. (Since *Peking Man* takes equally unkind cuts at its most famous character, the proudly ignorant "Wan-yüan-hu t'ai-t'ai" 萬元戶太太or "Mistress Ten-Thousandaire," critics have not illogically concluded that Chang Hsin-hsin is disenchanted with China's peasants.[35]) But it may be that the maid was planted in the old stamp collector's household by the fellow who recommended her – the one with the expensive life-style. We do not know. Above all, we do not know but what the old man made up his story about having been held hostage. Anyone could fabricate a homemade stamp and put "1923" on it.

Socially speaking, the subject is stamp-collecting, not as a thing in

itself like bell-changing in a Dorothy Sayers novel, but as a metaphor for human obsession. A lot of people come to covet the old man's dragon stamp for its monetary value. That is social exposure of greed. But *Envelope* is far more a twentieth-century satire than a nineteenth-century one. Some characters come to want the stamp more than the money, just because everyone else wants it; they have caught the fever. Near the end, Chang zooms in on a crowd scene. Hundreds of people have lined up to buy a new issue without knowing anything about it. We learn this by reading the text of a story filed by a *New York Times* reporter. He wants the outside world to know: The Chinese are going crazy over little pieces of paper. Like "Orchid Madness," *Envelope, Postcard, Block-of-Four* is about collective insanity.

And journalism? Besides the cameo reference just mentioned, we have seen that the fantastic plot of *Envelope* is partly based on a real news story half a century old. There may even be a link to *Peking Man,* for there are certain resemblances between some characters in the two works. Chang Hsin-hsin began interviewing people for *Peking Man* in early 1984 (the final draft of *Envelope* was written only in 1985), and some of the 100 subjects in *Peking Man* were her old acquaintances. Perhaps Chang Hsin-hsin reused some of her characters, if only unconsciously.[36]

Peking Man

Excepts from *Peking Man* were first published in China in January 1985. Imagine the sensation: it was a masterpiece in a new format, with segments of it rationed equally among five of China's most prestigious literary journals; the excerpts were printed simultaneously, in each journal's premier 1985 issue, so that the work dominated literary talk at the start of the new year; it was a breaking of silence by an author who was all the more popular for having been unfairly persecuted for a year; and, having been printed in America first, it had a "special unexpurgated foreign issue" cachet, as if it were being brought home only now that China, in the course of her liberalization, was sophisticated enough to tolerate its message.

The outstanding appeal of the work for ordinary readers must be its double challenge to China's hidebound literary and journalistic formalism. *Peking Man* penetrates the orthodoxy of officially-approved thought with stark truthfulness, and shatters the structural formalism of socialist realism with the apparent randomness and open-endedness of its many

"conversations." There is no false idealism among the characters, no sanitization of the environment, no prettification of the language or final outcome, as in most Chinese fiction. Far less is there the political journalese, "positive" generalizing, and didacticism of reportage. The subject is as familiar as a dime-novel murder: human lives, coping with both the Cultural Revolution and the confusing reforms of the present. Yet one life leads only to another, not to any lesson. For once, one really cannot foresee what will happen next. Even so, each life is, in its own way, a variation on each Chinese reader's own experience.

Chang Hsin-hsin and Sang Yeh's "new" *cinéma verité* style itself creates an illusion of unprecedented "lack of censorship." The reader unexpectedly overhears people react to the recorder. Near the end of an interview with one particularly unsavory character – and half-way through the book – one is shocked to learn that he has been exposing himself without even knowing he is being formally interviewed. He asks Chang and Sang not to write what he has said (p. 396). Did they betray him? Fear of exposure to the authorities is one of those universal conditions that anyone can appreciate.

Although Chang and Sang's role was precisely one of "censorship," their characters enter taboo areas. Several joke about heads of Party and state. A theoretician of Marxism-Leninism confides that the Party is too rotten to be rectified and says "Communism" would lose if tested in a truly free election (pp. 259-60). A young man is asked point-blank if he believes in Communism; he tells Chang and Sang that most writers other than Liu Pin-yen are liars, maybe including them (pp. 203-204). A factory salesman from Cho-hsien brags about bribing buyers. A border resident confesses that her husband crossed the Soviet border on a lark. A peasant woman explains how to break the one-child law. A United Front official angry about Taiwanese boatmen's smuggling admits that he must appease them without appearing to be doing it for political reasons, even though he is. Several characters are bad role models, not very nice even during the interview. But the authors can say that their characters are real, though not necessarily typical, for they are too numerous and their experiences are too diverse. Chang and Sang interview a former prostitute, the brother of a Ch'ing emperor, a Taiwan fisherman, and two people who have experienced the correctional system.

The daring of *Peking Man* as journalism is partly due to its conception as a work for the American Chinese market. Says Wang Yü 王渝, the

New York editor who urged Chang and Sang to undertake *Peking Man* and gave them a place to publish it, if they had been writing for the Chinese their "psychology would have been completely different."[37] They would have felt more inhibited. Even in New York they published under unknown pen names. Their earliest interviewees were famous people, too, including friends and connections (many are from the theater and arts world).

It was actually at the suggestion of Chang's collaborator that a general concept of the book was first generated, prior to the interviewing. The project was to be a Chinese remake of Studs Terkel's *American Dreams.*[38] However, *Peking Man* was always more open-ended than *American Dreams.* Terkel's book has a theme: the American dream, as myth, motivation, and reality. *Peking Man* does not revolve around so particular a national ideal or self-conception – not even around any single period or social experience. Some characters tell how the Cultural Revolution or another past era shaped their lives; some focus on their dreams and disillusionments in the new age of reform; others seem to represent an occupation, a particular obstacle in Chinese society they have faced, or an activity they were engaged in when they caught the interviewers' eye (cycling, *ch'i-kung* 氣功 exercises); some are simply record-holders or oddities. (The book features two beautiful women, including a model, perhaps because *American Dreams* opens with a former Miss U.S.A.) After *Peking Man* enjoyed its first Chinese exposure, in January 1985, it came to seem open-ended in the fullest sense of the word, for Chang and Sang kept on interviewing people. One character in the book comments on segments of *Peking Man* he has already seen (p. 309). *Peking Man* thus presents itself as an ongoing public opinion poll – a dynamic means of self-expression which the Chinese otherwise lack.

But how do we categorize *Peking Man* in relation to oral history and literature? Let us begin with the American model (which, strangely enough, was inspired by oral history research conducted in China).[39] Studs Terkel's books may be called well-sifted collections of artfully condensed oral histories. Proceeding from hundreds of tape recordings of his own interviews with deponents, Terkel selects the cream (from among hundreds) and creates from them "highly processed" oral history transcripts. The degree of his alteration is never made explicit. It is relatively great, for the deponents' statements are coherent and even elegant, though reassuringly idiomatic. Terkel admits that he is looking for elegance of expression: the "poets" among the people (his idea, not Mao's), and "the phrase that explodes."[40] Probably he deletes sentences, even paragraphs, simply because their ore

contains little metal. Still more unorthodox is Terkel's deletion of his questions and comments from the text, turning dialogue into monologue. One result is that the creativity and aggressiveness of the interviewer (in broaching new topics, drawing comparisons, and so forth), are transferred to the interviewee. Also, like any producer of a manuscript, Terkel must decide how to order the interviews he keeps. In this there is juxtapositional irony, as when one character appears to comment on another. Otherwise, Terkel expresses himself only through the indirect and veiled control he exercises as questioner. One might be able to guess, from his choice of mythic topics such as "the American dream" and his choice of witnesses that he is of skeptical, liberal, or populist bent, but then again one might not.

Hence oral historians have not criticized Terkel for having a hidden agenda, but on the formal grounds of having heavy-handedly manipulated his transcripts and disguised his method to boot. One academic maligned this amateur, results-oriented approach as "Terkelism."[41] Yet, Terkel only takes to extreme the considerable "processing" of deponents' words that oral history technique allows. Professional oral historians do not alter bad grammar or idiosyncratic idiom (nor does Terkel – they add color to his books), but they freely censor false sentence starts, stuttering, pausers ("ah," "er, er"), and even repetition, so that the deponent's "voice" may be more clearly heard.[42] Terkel's subtle and pervasive editing, caused by his quest for eloquence, moves oral history into the realm of art, with all its refinement and authorial subjectivity. And yet, American journalists, under the influence of the interpretation-oriented New Journalism, have faulted Terkel for presenting mere "raw materials." This is the main charge that has been hurled at *Peking Man* by Chinese creative writers.[43] In both cases, the issue between author and critics seems not really to be the lack of "artistic" processing, but rather the absence of a clear ontological context.

Peking Man takes "Terkelism" one big step further, moving the genre unambiguously into the "literature" category (once we know the book's method). The same as its model, *Peking Man* presents the words of 100 people, distilled from several hundred interviews. Chang and Sang's questions and comments are deleted, even more than in Terkel's books. Moreover, Chang Hsin-hsin (whose voice seems to be heard more strongly than her co-author's) typically did not refer to tapes while writing the book, nor even notes. She reproduced her deponents' stories from memory, freely editing, selecting, and even reordering the topics of discourse.[44] So the

words and opinions in *Peking Man's* depositions are authentic, but the conversations as we see them are invented. *Peking Man* is nonfiction, and possibly still within the outer bounds of oral history, but in effect it is creative writing by Chang Hsin-hsin – with a little help from her friends, old and new. No wonder it seems so fresh and original.

Rather than try to classify *Peking Man* in relation to journalism, literature, and history, let us distinguish between methods that convey information, historical voices, and more abstract appreciations of character. Workaday journalists and historians alike dig for facts, asking questions over and over in order to ferret them out and confirm them (Chang Hsin-hsin admits to having thus interrogated people on occasion, but we never see that, for she has edited out all evidence of it). No elegant transcript emerges from such labors. The taped record will be overwhelmed by repetition and evidence of the interviewer's strategy. The voice of the historian or journalist may even dominate the dialogue.

The oral historian, however, wants not his deponents' knowledge, but their voices: their styles of thought and expression, in the context of their individual worlds of experience. To this end, the interviewer works to get the speaker to produce a narrative. Grilling for information would spoil the narrative and hide the self-motivating voice; heavy editing, on the other hand, would falsify it. Attacked by regular historians for sacrificing "hard" facts in the pursuit of "soft" art, the oral historian counters by saying that voices are as illuminating as facts.

The creative writer moves one step further from raw material, sculpting an impression of his or her subject. The result of this tertiary interpretive activity is a character sketch – or a piece of analytical New Journalism. The raw materials are both hard data and the character's own voice, but they are abstracted and transformed by the synthetic powers of the writer. The character sketch actually predates the novel in Western (English and French) literary history; in its original seventeenth and eighteenth century form, the sketch presented people not as individuals but as embodiments of certain professions or personality types. Chang Hsin-hsin's characters probably belong in this category. Individual, even eccentric, as each may be (in comparison to characters in socialist realism) – and much as Chang wants to transcend the Marxist-Leninist idea of "typical characters" – each chapter does after all communicate only a few interesting corners of Chinese social reality: corners that intrigued Chang Hsin-hsin. If only in this way, her selection of characters is an avenue of personal expression.

As in oral history, all narration is in the voice of the deponent, and probably no words have been invented. But every word is on the page only because it held Chang Hsin-hsin's attention.

Is not the original representation of *Peking Man*, in the authors' surpreface, as "literature from transcribed oral accounts" (*k'ou-shu shih-lu wen-hsueh* 口述實錄文學) a little misleading, then? Probably so. But writing down externally derived "realities" and using tape recordings to back them up is a good strategy for protecting the enterprise from political interference. The often-heard defense that one writes "only fiction" will not work in China, for fiction is expected to be more "truthful" (representative) than nonfiction itself.

It seems anomalous that *Peking Man* sometimes relentlessly pursues data — as if Chang were writing history or sociology instead of oral history — much less a personal narrative in the guise of oral history. Her information is interesting, to be sure. She gives "inside dope" on salaries, social prejudices, and relations in the workplace; in one place we can deduce that she simply asked, "What tricks of your trade can you share with us?" (p. 395; cf. p. 172). But sometimes the data interrupt her narrative and distract us from her characters' testimony. It is, indeed, a flaw common in the Anglo-American detective story genre, including *Envelope, Postcard, Block-of-Four.* But politics may be blamed, too. It is the closed nature of Chang's society that makes information on "how society works" so precious, leading to a fixation on "how things really get done." Some of Chang's readers are bound to have read *Peking Man* as a how-to manual. Indeed, many peasants wrote her letters asking for advice on how to raise martens for profit, so that they, too, could get rich like the "Ten-Thousandaire" Chang interviewed![45]

What vision, then, is Chang Hsin-hsin expressing, if her voice is mixed with the voices of her characters? Isolating it from each of her 100 extracts and synthesizing the whole far exceeds the ambitions of this little essay. We need by no means assume that Chang Hsin-hsin's vision is unitary or explicitly formulated, either. There are some passages touching on Chang's own heartfelt concerns that do leap out at us. A young writer relates the pain of not being able to fall out of love with a boy who dated her only for her Peking residence permit. A cabaret singer badly in need of self-confidence lists the songs she's not allowed to sing, and tells how her kind were jerked around by the campaign against spiritual pollution. A woman so beautiful that men stop to stare at her ends on the observation (p. 305),

"The pity is I don't have anything else to give. No nothing." (Chang Hsin-hsin, though actually rather attractive, has had doubts about that.) A young woman whose education was terminated by the Cultural Revolution confides pathetic plans for self-study. And a widow describes how society endlessly subjects her to rumor. Add to this a certain muckraking tone, a calculated assault on myths (like Terkel's – but mostly the characters themselves carry this off, without any authorial intervention), an evident desire to show that Chinese people's thinking is different from what the press says, and to preserve historical memory, and we must be part way to understanding Chang's vision.

Chang Hsin-hsin told Gayle Feldman that she wanted *Peking Man* to "tell people all over the world that the Chinese aren't just a billion blue ants. I also wanted to tell people here that everyone's experience is different – but it also is the same."[46] Determining the "common experience" is a fine point that will no doubt lead to contradictory theories. We see the Chinese always facing man-made hardships, always trying to overcome them, and yet always on the make. But we see idealists and do-gooders, too. What is evident is the diversity served up. It speaks to special concerns of the era, and to some of Chang's own anxieties, as seen in her fiction. In 1983-84 all Chinese faced not only new opportunities but unprecedented and stressful *choice*: How should I spend my money, now that there are more things to buy? Should I go back to school, now that I have the chance? Are there any new ways of finding a mate before it is too late? Above all, the Chinese faced choices about making a living. Those thriving were in private enterprise, like "Mistress Ten-Thousandaire," or running scams, like the Cho-hsien factory salesman. Like it or not, one just might after all be the captain of one's own fate.

The fictional technique in *Peking Man* nails down the fact that it is not pure reportage. There is much fun with language, including arch use of slang, double meanings, and sheer creativity of expression by the folk. Common people who mistakenly assume the intellectual-sounding Chang and Sang to be representatives of China's official culture even mock the young writers by quoting government slang "back at them" ("I am *not* exaggerating – I seek truth from facts," says a snack peddler, p. 50).

Chang Hsin-hsin's construction of a comedy of manners through selectivity is hard to analyze, for we do not know what material she started with. However, we can observe her setting up dramatic confrontations through third-party comments that interrupt her characters' monologues,

as when city people on a subway laugh at the malapropisms of a twelve-year-old country boy who has fled to Peking from a famine area (p. 548). Some people, like "Mistress Ten-Thousandaire," appear unwittingly to satirize themselves. Most interesting of all, deponents sometimes subtly bring the silent interviewers into view by repeating – even mocking – their questions. Thus they interact with Chang and Sang as youths (meaning, "inexperienced"), city folk ("educated"), or in the eyes of the farcically assertive but secretly insecure "Mistress Ten-Thousandaire," people with low fixed salaries. In the last case, the subject's attempts to poke fun at the differing mores of the educated interviewers are turned back on the subject.

> You need to ask? But we got ever'thing you got. Color TV, tape recorder, bicycle, refrigerator – and we got a house. Do you have a house? (Authors' note: Husband says: Do you have their education?) Education? Education ain't no use. If you wanna get rich, junior high'll getcha by. You cain't sell education! (p. 87)

Chang Hsin-hsin also uses juxtapositional irony. A former child bride who selflessly joined the revolution follows a spoiled old man who owes his position to his work abroad but now likes to complain about foreigners (pp. 20-36). A skilled and upbeat truck driver in Shen-chen follows a hopelessly suspicious and self-serving mid-level manager (in a Hsin Hua 新華Bookstore) (pp. 170-78). The Party theorist who fears the death of Communism prepares the way for a smug, time-serving bureaucrat who handles United Front policy (pp. 259-69). And the badly intimidated cabaret singer leads into a fellow who is all agog about "The Third Wave" and "Megatrends" (pp. 145-58). Structural ironies are evident even in individual histories. After baring her soul about her singing, what she has to do to stay out of trouble, and the frustrations of her love life, the cabaret girl ends on this come-down: "How do I make my living? I sell shoes."

What, then, of modernism? I would call *Peking Man* more a product of Chang Hsin-hsin's developing modernist consciousness than a manifestation of modernist technique. In this book, technique has been put to the purpose of illuminating social reality, not riddles of existence. At last we see a tension between journalism and modernism. Still, if the book is to be appreciated as a whole – and I think it is – then pulling it all together requires a reading

similar to that for *Envelope, Postcard, Block-of-Four.* The book presents a deductive game, in several ways. To fully understand any given sketch, the reader must figure out what questions led to the printed answers and lines of reflection. Then, how do the individual responses fit into a larger life pattern? Finally, how do the many lives form themselves into one Chinese pattern? The randomness of modern life is allowed to speak for itself, without artificial authorial intervention. If confusion, anomie, and entropy are the only messages we can derive, perhaps they are Chang Hsin-hsin's, too. One hundred versions of the truth may or may not be intended as a deliberate vision of chaos, but we may be sure that Chang is still exploring, for her own satisfaction, just "how the world works."

Chang Hsin-hsin's future direction is unclear. For now, she is continuing with nonfiction essays and even reportage, as in her 1986-87 fiftieth-anniversary remake, with Sang Yeh, of Mao Tun's 茅盾 *One Day in China.* Because it is based on written depositions, however, Chang has far less freedom to creatively reconstruct her texts than in *Peking Man.* She can select or reject a deposition, but she is not free to rewrite it. Hence *One Day in China* lacks the vitality of *Peking Man.* There is, however, no reason to assume that Chang Hsin-hsin has permanently devoted herself to any one genre, or indeed to nonfiction. In the end, even modernism and journalism may figure chiefly as stages in her development as a writer.

Notes

1. Henry S. Resnik, "When America Was Singing 'Buddy, Can You Spare a Dime?' " *Saturday Review* 53 (April 18, 1970), 27-30.
2. Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: A Study of Lu Xun* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 25-68. Jeffrey C. Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 86-95.
3. Hsiao Ch'ien, *Pan-chia-shih* 搬家史 (The story of my moves), serialized in *Peimei jih-pao* 北美日報(New York), March 6-27, 1987. I have translated this intriguing memoir. Its publication in China was delayed half a year, due to the deterioration of the literary climate in early 1987.
4. Rudolf G. Wagner, "Liu Binyan and the *Texie*," *Modern Chinese Literature* 2:1 (Spring 1986), 63-98. Perry Link, ed., *People or Monsters*? (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983). On the history of Chinese reportage, see also: Shen Ts'ung-wen, "Lun t'e-hsieh" 論特寫 (On special-feature journalism), Tientsin *I-shih-pao*, Jan. 31, 1948, reprinted in *Shen Ts'ung-wen wen-chi* 沈從文文集(The works of Shen Ts'ung-wen) (Hong Kong: San-lien, 1982-85), 12: 136-42; Leo Ou-fan Lee and Andrew J. Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture: Journalism and Fiction," in David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

1985); and Yin-Hwa Chou, "Formal Features of Chinese Reportage and an Analysis of Liang Qichao's 'Memoirs of My Travels in the New World,' " *Modern Chinese Literature* 1:2 (Spring 1985), 201-17. The same issue has "Reportage and I," by the Taiwan author Po Yang 柏楊.

5. Reported by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report, China,* April 15, 1987.
6. Individual character sketches were originally published individually and serially in *Mei-chou Hua-ch'iao jih-pao* 美洲華僑日報(New York), 1984-1985. Some of them, slightly revised, were published for the first time in China in the Jan. 1985 issues of *Chung-shan* 鍾山 (Mt. Chung), *Shang-hai wen-hsüeh* 上海文學 (Shanghai literature), *Shou-huo* 收獲 (Harvest), *Wen-hsüeh-chia* 文學家 (Writers), and *Tso-chia* 作家 (Authors). Some of those were reprinted in *Hsiao-shuo yüeh-pao* (Short story monthly) 65 (May 1985). Still more characters were printed in *Tso-chia* 1985: 3 (March 1985) and *Shang-hai wen-hsüeh* 94 (July 1, 1985). Finally, the whole book of 100 characters (like the 100 in Terkel's *American Dreams*) appeared from the Shang-hai wen-i ch'u-pan-she in August 1986. Liu Pin-yen agreed to be interviewed for the book, but Chang Hsin-hsin did not follow up. Liu had already been interviewed so many times that he was repeating himself.
7. "Hsing yün erh – tui 26 ke wen-t'i ti hui-ta"辛運兒—對26個問題的回答 (Lucky me – here are my answers to 26 questions), *Wen-hui yüeh-k'an* 57 (Feb. 10, 1985), 13. *Pei-ching-jen* (1986 book ed.), pp. 613, 616.
8. Helmut Martin, "Social Criticism in Contemporary Chinese Literature: New Forms of pao-kao-Reportage by Chang Hsin-hsin," an essay to be published in Taipei by Academia Sinica, revised from Zhang Xinxin and Sang Ye, *Peking Menschen*, German translation ed. by Helmut Martin (Köln: Diederichs, 1986), postscript. Carolyn Wakeman, "Fiction's End: Zhang Xinxin's 'New Approaches to Creativity,' " 1987 essay. Both Martin and Wakeman have interviewed Chang Hsin-hsin.
9. Li Hui and Chang Hsin-hsin, "Tien-hsing, huang-yen chi ch'i-t'a" 典型，荒誕及其他 (Models, the Absurd, Etc.), *Wai-kuo wen-hsüeh* 1985: 11 (Nov. 1985), 47-49.
10. See "Chang Hsin-hsin tso-p'in t'ao-lun-hui ts'e-chi"張辛欣作品討論會側記(Forum on the works of Chang Hsin-hsin: Notes from the sidelines), *Wen-hsüeh yen-chiu tung-t'ai* 117 (April 15, 1984), 17-18.
11. To comparative literature scholars, the main peculiarity of my viewpoint may be my tracing of the wellsprings of modernism to late nineteenth century consciousness. It is a view stressed by intellectual historians (but usually argued with literary evidence). See Frederick R. Karl, *Modern and Modernism* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), and Daniel Joseph Singal, *The War Within: From Victorian to Modernist Thought in the South, 1919-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).
12. Interview with Chang Hsin-hsin, Shanghai, November 5, 1986.
13. Wakeman, "Fiction's End."
14. Interview with Chang Hsin-hsin, November 5, 1986. She says she learned about psychology in fiction through novels by Henry James and Proust.
15. Wakeman, "Fiction's End." See also *Chang Hsin-hsin hsiao-shuo chi* 張辛欣小說集 (A Collection of short stories by Chang Hsin-hsin) (Ha-erh-pin: Pei-fang wen-i ch'u-pan-she, 1985), pp. 429-31.
16. *Chang Hsin-hsin hsiao-shuo chi*, pp. 119-245. Wakeman's essay traces modernist tendencies in Chang's early fiction, including this story. In a letter to me of June

8, 1987, Chang insisted that this story is autobiographical only in certain "exterior" aspects.

17. *Chang Hsin-hsin hsiao-shuo chi*, pp. 260-79.
18. Chang Hsin-hsin, "Theatrical Effects," tr. Jeffrey C. Kinkley, *Fiction* 8: 2/3 (1987), 155.
19. Ibid., p. 147. See Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Intellectual Freedom in China After Mao* (New York: Fund for Free Expression, 1984).
20. *Chang Hsin-hsin hsiao-shuo chi*, pp. 304-26. This translation is adapted from Jeffrey C. Kinkley, "Current Problems and Prospects for Chinese Literature in Mainland China," *Issues and Studies* 22: 1 (Jan. 1986), 123-24.
21. Interview with Chang Hsin-hsin, Nov. 5, 1986. Transformation from a human into an animal is a Kafka theme, as Wakeman and Martin point out, but the plot of "Orchid Madness" is nearly a carbon of Ionesco's *Rhinoceros.* Chang told me in interview that the derivativeness of the story's plot diminishes it in her estimation. Still, she may be too hard on herself. The "madness" she explores differs in substance, cause, and manifestations from the madness (fascism) that is the subject of *Rhinoceros*, and the comedy of the story is strictly Chang Hsin-hsin's.
22. On the origin of "Orchid Madness," see "Tien-hsing," p. 51. In interview, Chang indicated that she was writing of orchid mania in Ch'ang-ch'un, and that indeed the citizens of Ch'ang-ch'un came to hate her because of the bad publicity the story brought them. Since the city is not mentioned by name, though, its mania must already have been known through the press, though *People's Daily* reported on orchid mania (in An-shan) only a year later, on June 16, 1984. See " 'Feng-k'uang' ti chü-tzu-lan chiao-i" (The "mad" trafficking in *chün-tzu* orchids), cited in Pi Hua 璧華, "Jung-hsü tso-chia tsou tsai cheng-chih-chia ti ch'ien-mien" 容許作家走在政治家的前面(Let authors travel ahead of politicians), *Chiu-shih nien-tai* 175 (Aug. 1, 1985), 103. See also note 36.
23. Gayle Feldman, a free-lance writer for *Publishers Weekly,* has followed Chang's hardships. Wang Yü said that Chang finally got her diploma a year late in a seminar on Chang Hsin-hsin convened by Marsha Wagner at Columbia University, May 2, 1987.
24. Chang Hsin-hsin, "Hsing yün erh," p. 13.
25. *Chang Hsin-hsin hsiao-shuo chi,* pp. 365-428. Information on Wang Meng from a June 8, 1987 letter from Chang.
26. Chang Hsin-hsin, *Feng p'ien lien, Shou-huo* 52 (Feb. 25, 1985), 4-92.
27. Contrary to Chang's statement in "Hsing yun erh," p. 13, the symbols are not internationally known. The International Postal Union does not use them, and old-timers in the U.S. Postal Service have never heard of them. But, Chang admits in the same article, she is not a collector. If she were, she might not find the hobby so strange and obsessive.
28. I came to this conclusion after a fruitless search of Chinese postal albums, then read Chang's own admission that she invented the story of the stamp after hearing local Shantung tales about the robbery. The later is in "Hui lao chia," *Chang Hsin-hsin hsiao-shuo chi*, p. 368.
29. I have analyzed Chinese post-Mao detective formulas in my *After Mao: Chinese Literature and Society, 1978-1981* (Cambridge: Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 1985), pp. 89-129. See also Perry Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

30. Chang Hsin-hsin, "Hsing yün erh," p. 13.
31. Interview with Chang Hsin-hsin, Nov. 5, 1986.
32. Chang speaks about reaching the masses through *Peking Man* and her television program *People Along the Canal* in "Tien-hsing, huang-yen chi ch'i-t'a," pp. 50-51. See also the essay by Martin and *Pei-ching-jen*, p. 613. Since *Peking Man*, Chang has continued writing popular reportage and working for television. She is filming *Envelope.* I do not agree with Martin that the novel mainly spoofs (instead of exploiting) the detective genre, except insofar as Chang satirizes everything all the time. Thus there is a facetious reference to Agatha Christie (p. 71) and so forth.
33. Li Hui and Chang Hsin-hsin, "Tien-hsing, huang-yen chi ch'i-t'a," p. 51.
34. C. T. Hsia, "The Scholar-Novelist and Chinese Culture," in Andrew H. Plaks, ed., *Chinese Narrative* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 266-305.
35. Lu Min 路敏, "Hsin ch'ao chung ti chung-sheng-hsiang 新潮中的衆生相 (A new-wave view of creation), *Cheng-ming* 97 (Nov. 1, 1985), 56. The piece "Wan-yüan-hu hu-chu," in *Pei-ching-jen*, pp. 83-89, originally bore the word "t'ai-t'ai" 太太, which in mainland China has a satirical edge because the word is considered old-fashioned. Courtesy Wang Yü, Columbia seminar, May 2, 1987.
36. In *Envelope*, the old collector Hsü Pang-han 徐邦翰 struck me as a possible composite of the coin-collecting "Old Man" (*Pei-ching-jen*, pp. 61-67) and the "First Customer," pp. 20-29. The retired folk reminded me of the ones at Pao-t'ou, pp. 505-15. There is, as it happens, a reverse link between *Peking Man* and "Orchid Madness." A *chün-tzu* orchid specialist who is featured in *Peking Man* (pp. 470-75) gives information about the introduction of the orchid into China similar to that in "Orchid Madness." Chang told me she went up to interview a real flower maniac only after she wrote her short story.
37. Wang Yü, Columbia seminar, May 2, 1987.
38. Interview with Chang Hsin-hsin, Nov. 5, 1986. Wang Yü, at the Columbia seminar, said that she suggested the interviewing project, while Sang Yeh introduced the idea of using Terkel for a model. That sounds plausible. In *Pei-ching-jen*, pp. 610-11, Sang Yeh evidences familiarity with Terkel's *Working.* Chang Hsin-hsin in interview said she had not read *Working*; she added that only *American Dreams* and *The Good War* were translated into Chinese. Terkel interviews famous people as well as people on the street, and the occupational emphasis of *Working* seems evident in *Peking Man.*
39. The idea for Terkel's first oral history book, *Division Street,* came from Terkel's publisher friend André Schiffrin, who had read Jan Myrdal's *Report from a Chinese Village.* Ronald J. Grele, ed., *Envelopes of Sound* (Chicago: Precedent, 1975), pp. 21-22.
40. Terkel, cited in Grele, p. 12.
41. James Hoopes, *Oral History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 13-14.
42. Cullom Davis, Kathryn Back and Kay MacLean, *Oral History: From Tape to Type* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1977), pp. 51-52. See also Willa K. Baum, *Transcribing and Editing Oral History* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977).
43. Helen Epstein, "Tape It Again Studs," *The Washington Post Book World*, Oct. 5, 1980. Lawrence Goodwyn, "In the Right Kind of Trouble," *The New Republic* 183 (Nov. 15, 1980), 30-32.

44. *Pei-ching-jen*, p. 612, alludes to this, and I nailed it down in my Nov. 5, 1986 interview. Chang said she reordered topics of conversation.
45. Interview with Chang Hsin-hsin, November 5, 1986.
46. Gayle Feldman, "Extracts from an Interview with Zhang Xinxin (September 1986)," unpublished.