

**Coming of Age in Hong Kong:
A study of a colonial literary field
in the 1950s**

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*I dedicate this thesis to my late grandparents – for their love and
their optimism about life.*

Abstract

This thesis discusses five novels written in the 1950s by Chinese émigré writers, also known as ‘southbound literati’, who had moved from mainland China to the south seeking refuge in Hong Kong from continuous warfare and political upheaval on the Mainland during the first decades of the twentieth century. The study traces the disrupted lineage of modern Chinese literary history by revealing a revival of the youth plot among their coming-of-age stories. The thesis examines the literary-historical context in which the Bildungsroman was introduced in modern Chinese literature and discusses how marginalized subjects achieve *Bildung* and growth in Hong Kong’s colonial society; Hong Kong’s literary and publishing field of the 1950s; and how the Hong Kong Bildungsroman of the 1950s facilitated the formation and dissemination of nation-building narratives.

The study follows the development of the Bildungsroman from its emergence in eighteenth-century Germany to recent discourses and theories written in Western and Chinese languages, with a focus on generic characteristics including the protagonist’s journey, the role of secondary characters, and the tension between an individual’s potential and social reality. In the last century the Bildungsroman was introduced into China via Western translations as part of the Chinese discourse on modernism. It became a prominent genre that reflected and expressed the shifting meanings of youth and selfhood. Coming-of-age novels also appeared in Taiwanese and Hong Kong literature exploring the topic of the individual and her or his place in society. 1950s Hong Kong offered many émigré writers a particular cultural niche in which they were able to pursue their profession and further their development and adaption of modern literary forms and formats.

The thesis presents readings of the novels *The Story of Shrimp Ball* (Huang Guliu), *The Hotel* (Cao Juren), *Yindi: A Barcarolle* (Qi Huang), *Love at Gulang Island* (Huang Sicheng), and *A Hong’s Boyhood* (Bai Mu). It argues that the Hong Kong Bildungsromans of the 1950s share some striking characteristics that revolve around such motifs as a strong connecting link to the homeland,

reevaluation of established moral values, and alienation from the city, all of which guide the hero to a certain kind of *Bildung*. In this regard the Hong Kong coming-of-age novels show that a hero's growth and formation follow a path that presupposes his or her departure from the place of origin and negotiation between established and newly-acquired values, resulting in an enlightened and affirmative perspective on the status quo.

KEYWORDS

Hong Kong literature; southbound literati; 1950s; *Bildung*; *Bildungsroman*; coming-of-age novel; literary field; instalment fiction; cultural nationalism; traditional values, alienation

Annotations

Romanisation of Chinese

Terms and expressions in Chinese are presented in traditional Chinese characters. Names are presented in Hanyu pinyin according to the *Basic Rules of Chinese Phonetic Alphabet Orthography* (2012). Alternative words and author names that are known and established in common usage are enclosed in square brackets, e.g. 'Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan]'.

Translations

All translations from primary sources are by the author of the thesis unless indicated otherwise. The original Chinese text is omitted from long quotations due to limited space. Grammatical mistakes in titles or source texts have been corrected for clarity and are indicated by their enclosure in square brackets.

Chinese names

Chinese names follow Chinese convention, with the surname before the first name, e.g., Cao Juren 曹聚仁. Authors published using a Western first name are presented as such, e.g. 'Lorraine Wong'.

We shall not cease from exploration
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time.

—T. S. Eliot

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research interest

The subject of a hero crossing from childhood to adulthood and finding his or her place in the world is a huge and intriguing trope. Coming-of-age stories have witnessed several rises and declines in the past 220 years since the publication of Johann Wolfgang Goethe's seminal novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795/96), yet the genre known by the German term 'Bildungsroman' has remained a fascinating subject for both writers and scholars. And to readers, the growth and the *Bildung* of the individual are captivating and inspirational because they follow a universal human trope.

This thesis investigates Hong Kong's literary field in the 1950s via a selected corpus of what has come to be known as southbound literati or southbound writers' (*nanlai wenren/nanlai zuojia* 南來文人/南來作家) coming-of-age novels.¹ It focuses on narratives by a minority group of Chinese émigré writers who define themselves against the norm of the ruling powers, finding integration into the society in which they live impossible. The framework includes both structural and cultural parameters of analysis. Methodologically, it tests the notion of the Western Bildungsroman, including how applicable it is to a particular Chinese context, and towards this end deploys tools taken from narratology, sociology and discourse analysis, among others. This thesis has the potential to add significantly to our understanding of Cold War Hong Kong as a contact zone – a place where cultures collided and colluded and immigrants from China encountered a modernity that appeared alien and often hostile.² It argues

¹ The term *southbound literati* describes Chinese writers who emigrated southwards, including to Southeast Asia, especially during the first half of the twentieth century. Chapter 4 of this study provides an in-depth discussion of this group of writers and their historical context.

² The term 'contact zone' describes 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths'. Pratt draws on the ethnographic concept of transculturation, a term that refers to the

that the literary field of the 1950s, which until recently has been overlooked by Sinophone literature studies³ from outside Hong Kong, offered an abode where Chinese migrants torn between the twin demands of survival and reinvention of their former selves struggled to come to terms with their precarious existence. This research offers readers outside the field of Chinese studies a valuable resource for understanding emergent cultural forms that reflect social instability arising from the global spread of contemporary neoliberal capitalism.

Offering a novel perspective on Hong Kong's literary field in the 1950s, this thesis integrates prior scholarship on the globalizing genre of the Bildungsroman and its local antecedents. By examining the period of disintegration following the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, and in particular by tracing a significant portion of modern Chinese literary history – qua history of dis/continuity – played out on the margins of the British Empire, the thesis guides the reader towards a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of that epoch's cultural productions within a global framework. Based on close readings of a selected body of texts, it especially engages with two questions. The first of these is the entanglement of novels from 1950s Hong Kong with various traditions – modern, Chinese, Western – in which the spiritual struggles of migrants are repositioned as pivotal to acquiring a Hong-Kong cultural identity. The second is how the migrant writers encountered and strove to come to terms with the colonial city's otherness and sheer novelty. The ways in which writers employed and as often as not bent existing generic formulae to represent their experience of abrupt downward mobility and other disorientating spatiotemporal shifts is especially studied.

responses of subordinated or marginal groups to a dominant or metropolitan culture. For Pratt, transculturation and autoethnography are phenomena that illustrate the reciprocal exchange of the contact zone, particularly the texts of the latter 'often constitutes a marginalized group's point of entry into the dominant circuits of print culture'. See Mary Louise Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Profession*, 1991, 34–36. This concept is further elaborated and discussed with regard to travel writing in Pratt's book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

³ For Shi Shumei [Shih Shu-mei] Sinophone studies includes 'a network of places of cultural production outside of China and on the margins of China and Chineseness, where historical process of heterogenizing and localizing of continental Chinese culture has taking place for several centuries'. See Shi Shumei, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific, Asia Pacific Modern* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 4.

This thesis posits that the Bildungsroman concept played a threefold role during the 1950s: first by extending the discourse on modern selfhood introduced by May Fourth⁴ intellectuals and subsequently built upon by Hong Kongs coming-of-age novels; second, adumbrating the tension between individuality and socialization, allowing the genre to mirror the initiation and inner struggle of the southbound writers, caught as they were at the margin of colonial society; and third, in the way that the coming-of-age stories' stage-by-stage patterning corresponds with the formal stylistic qualities of instalment fiction, perfectly discharging the aesthetic function of the Bildungsroman.

1.2 Research questions

The following research questions serve as a guide and focus throughout the eight chapters of this thesis:

1. How was the Bildungsroman introduced in Chinese literature, and what is the role of the figure of youth in this context?
2. What was the literary field in 1950s Hong Kong like, and what was the situation of the southbound literati? What are the special historical characteristics of the 1950s?
3. What role did the rise of print media and the emergence of the Hong Kong Bildungsroman play in the dissemination of nation-building narratives? Who were the main actors?
4. What else can these coming-of-age novels tell us about the diasporic transition and the formation of the southbound literati's identity in colonial Hong Kong? How is social integration depicted in this type of context? What are the characteristics of the *Bildung*⁵ of these individuals?

⁴ The May Fourth Movement (*Wusi yundong* 五四運動) (1917–1921) was a cultural and sociopolitical reform movement carried out by intellectuals to rebuild and strengthen Chinese society and culture. The movement takes its name from the massive popular students protest on May 4, 1919 in Beijing which was held against the decision of the Versailles Treaty that concluded World War I declaring the transfer of former German concessions in China to Japan and not, as had been expected, to China.

⁵ *Bildung* refers to the formation and self-cultivation of a person.

How does *Bildung* help the protagonists enter a society that insists on marginalizing identities such as theirs?

1.3 Source material

1.3.1 PRIMARY SOURCES IN CHINESE

The focus of this study is a selection of fiction by southbound writers whose works have been studied to date within the framework of migrant literature, including its left- and right-wing variants. It discusses how the portrayal of youth as a life-stage came to be circulated in the first decades of the twentieth century, particularly in the May Fourth era, and revived in the 1950s in Hong Kong, on the periphery of China, under the aegis of southbound coming-of-age novels. The figure of youth guides us into the problematic of southbound fiction as a new development in the colonial contact zone Hong Kong. As Jerome Buckley points out, in the Bildungsroman ‘the values of [the hero’s] childhood are frequently challenged ... It is part of the youth’s ordeal to suffer “alienation”, to experience the loss of home and father and the correlatives of innocence and faith, and to seek self-realization in a new and often unaccommodating environment’.⁶

Five works were chosen with which to study the trope of youth and social integration: one short, two medium-length and two full-length novels discussed in a 2009 paper by Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han].⁷ All of them centred on young protagonists growing up in the Hong Kong of the 1950s, with the exception of the two novels *The Story of Shrimp Ball* and *Love at Gulang Island*. The former is set in the late 1940s, whereas the latter takes place on an island off the coast of the city Xiamen 廈門 in south-eastern China. They are discussed under the heading of *southbound literati* writings, and are listed chiefly as exemplars of migrant literature.

⁶ Jerome H. Buckley, ‘Autobiography in the English Bildungsroman’, in *The Interpretation of Narrative: Theory and Practice*, ed. Morton W. Bloomfield, Harvard Studies in English (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 95.

⁷ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], ‘Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s’, in *Diasporic Histories: Cultural Archives of Chinese Transnationalism* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 143–55.

- Huang Guliu 黃谷柳: *The Story of Shrimp Ball* (*Xiaqiu zhuan* 蝦球傳) (1947/1957)⁸
- Cao Juren 曹聚仁: *The Hotel* (*Jiu dian* 酒店) (1952/1952)
- Qi Huang 齊桓: *Yindi: A Barcarolle* (*Yindi* 銀弟) (1953/1985)
- Huang Sicheng 黃思騁: *Love at Gulang Island* (*Gulang zhi lian* 鼓浪嶼之戀) (1953/195-)
- Bai Mu 百木 [Pei Mo]: *A Hong's Boyhood* (*A-Hong de tongnian* 阿弘的童年) (1954/1955)

Three of the novels centre on young protagonists growing up in Hong Kong in the 1950s, while *The Story of Shrimp Ball* is set in the late 1940s and *Love at Gulang Island* takes place on an island off the coast of the city of Xiamen 廈門 in south-eastern China. The novels are discussed by Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han] under the heading of southbound literati writing, and are listed in scholarship chiefly as exemplars of migrant literature.

Before these five coming-of-age stories came out in book form in the 1950s they appeared in instalments and newspaper supplements. For instance *The Story of Shrimp Ball* (Huang Guliu 黃谷柳) was published in *Huashang Newspaper* (*Huashang bao* 華商報) in 1947; *The Hotel* was printed in *Sing Tao Daily* (*Xingdao ribao* 星島日報) from February to August 1952; *Yindi: A Barcarolle* and *Love at Gulang Island* appeared in *Everyman's Literature* magazine (*Renren wenxue* 人人文學) in 1953; and *A Hong's Boyhood* appeared in *Everyone's Literature* in 1954. Most of these were very popular during their circulation in the 1950s and were reprinted several times.

This thesis analyses the book versions of these novels, which were revised many times by the writers before they were published. Although there is a growing body of scholarly literature on Chinese émigré intellectuals of the

⁸ The listed years in brackets refer to the publication year of the novel in instalment and in book form respectively.

twentieth century, Western scholars have paid much less attention to southbound writers in 1950s Hong Kong, whose work remains largely unexplored. This research contributes to Chinese and Western scholarship and broadens our understanding of this crucial period in Hong Kong's literary history.

1.3.2 SECONDARY SOURCES IN CHINESE

In the 1990s many books by Mainland Chinese scholars were published in China introducing the history of Hong Kong literature, many of them written from a Mainland Chinese perspective.⁹ Apart from these, there are a few works by Hong Kong scholars such as Liu Denghan's 劉登翰 *A History of Hong Kong Literature* (*Xianggang wenxue shi* 香港文學史) (1999) and *Writing Hong Kong@Stories on Literature* (*Shuxie Xianggang@wenxue gushi* 書寫香港@文學故事) (2008) compiled by Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] and Xu Xuwei 許旭筠. Hong Kong scholars have also published anthologies and bibliographies such as *A Bibliography of Hong Kong Literature* (*Xianggang wenxue shumu* 香港文學書目) (1996), compiled by Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], and *Brief*

⁹ From that perspective Hong Kong literature is considered part of modern Chinese literary history that did not follow an autonomous development and is often compared with the filial-maternal bond, as Liu Yichang (劉以鬯) has pointed out: 'Hong Kong literature wears the clothes of its British adoptive father and drinks the milk of its Chinese mother. Clothes can be changed, but mother's milk is a nutrient that is necessary for the body'. Huang Weiliang makes a similar point when he says that a strong motivation for mainland Chinese scholars to research Hong Kong literature lies in the fact that 'the mother needs to understand the "forsaken child" before it returns to her arms and the study of literature provides such understanding'. See Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, 'Tan Xianggang wenxue: yijiu jiuwunian shiyue shiqiri zai Zhongguo zuoxie jiuwei shang de fangyan 談香港文學——一九九五年十月十七日在中國作協酒會上的發言 (On Hong Kong Literature: Speech at the Reception of the China Writers' Association on October 17, 1995)', in *Changtan Xianggang wenxue* 暢談香港文學 (*Chatting Casually about Hong Kong Literature*), ed. Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 (Hong Kong: Huoyi chuban shiye youxian gongsi 獲益出版事業有限公司 (Benefit Publishing Company Limited), 2002), 123; Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, *Hong Kong Literature in the Context of Modern Chinese Literature*, Occasional Papers 18 (Hong Kong: Centre for Hong Kong studies, 1987), 23. The Hong Kong scholar Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] mentions that many published research works are informed by 'a predominantly mainland Chinese perspective'. See Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Two Discourses on Colonialism: Huang Guliu and Eileen Chang on Hong Kong of the Forties', *Boundary 2* 25, no. 3 (1998): 78, <https://doi.org/10.2307/303589>.

Biographies of Hong Kong Writers (*Xianggang wenxue zuojia zhuanlüe* 香港文學作家傳略) (1996) by Liu Yichang 劉以鬯.

Another such work is a series of anthologies concerning different periods in Hong Kong literature from the 1920s to the 1960s, compiled by the three Hong Kong researchers Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], and Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], which can be considered a notable and significant achievement in the field of Hong Kong literary studies. The five anthologies, published between 1998 and 2000 by Cosmos Books (*Tiandi tushu* 天地圖書), include *Selected Materials on Early Hong Kong New Literature (1927–1941)* (*Zaoqi Xianggang xin wenxue ziliao xuan* 早期香港新文學資料選, 一九二七—一九四一) (1998), *Selected Works on Early Hong Kong New Literature (1927–1941)* (*Zaoqi Xianggang xin wenxue zuopin xuan* 早期香港新文學作品選, 一九二七—一九四一) (1998), *Selected Materials on Hong Kong Literature during the Civil War Period (1945–1949)* (*Guogong neizhan shiqi Xianggang wenxue ziliao xuan* 國共內戰時期香港文學資料選, 一九四五—一九四九) (1999), *Selected Works of Local and Southbound Literati during the Civil War Period (1945–1949)* (*Guogong neizhan shiqi Xianggang bendi yu nanlai wenren zuopin xuan* 國共內戰時期香港本地與南來文人作品選, 一九四五—一九四九) (1999) (two volumes), and *A Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969* (*Xianggang xin wenxue nianbiao* 香港新文學年表, 一九五〇—一九六九年) (2000). The most recent, *Compendium of Hong Kong Literature 1919–1949* (*Xianggang wenxue daxi* 香港文學大系 1919–1949) (2016), is a thirteen-volume anthology compiled by the same editors and is the first in-depth and extensive critical compendium of Hong Kong literature to be produced by local Hong Kong researchers.

Apart from Zheng, Huang, and Lu's *Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969* (2000) few books exist on the Hong Kong literature of the 1950s, although Hong Kong scholars such as Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 (1917–2018), Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] (1949–2013), and Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han] made a great effort to study and promote that historical period, publishing many essays and articles, giving lectures and setting up

workshops about this particular time. More importantly, Liang, a writer himself known by his pen name Yesi (也斯) and professor of Comparative Literature at Lingnan University (Lingnan daxue) 嶺南大學 in Hong Kong, propelled many such projects. For instance the Centre for Humanities Research at Lingnan University edited a series of six publications in 2013 (see Illustration 1.1), funded by the University Grants Committee, under the heading 'Hong Kong Literature and Culture of the 1950s' (*Yijiu wuling niandai Xianggang wenxue yu wenhua* 1950年代香港文學與文化). The series consists of the following titles: *Ye Si's 1950s: Criticism of Hong Kong Literature and Culture* (*Yesi de wushi niandai: Xianggang wenxue yu wenhua lunji* 也斯的五十年代——香港文學與文化論集); *Half century Glimpses: Ronald P. Mar's Fiction* (*Ban shijie lüeying: Ma Boliang xiaoshuo ji* 半世界掠影——馬博良小說集); *Stories after the Long Night: Selected Short Stories of Li Kuang* (*Changye yihou de gushi: Li Kuang duanpian xiaoshuo xuan* 長夜以後的故事——力匡短篇小說選); *True Lies: Selected Short Stories of Evan Yang: An Anthology of Hong Kong Poetry of 1950s* (*Zhenshi de huanghua: Yi Wen de dushi xiaoshuo gushi* 真實的謊話——易文的都市小說故事); and *A Time of Pain and Pleasure: Hong Kong Culture of the 1950s* (*Tongku zhong you huanle de shidai: wuling niandai Xianggang wenhua* 痛苦中有歡樂的時代——五〇年代香港文化).

A further valuable source of secondary literature on the 1950s has been academic papers, articles and essays published in Hong Kong's literary magazines. Many studies and discussions by Hong Kong scholars have appeared in such journals as *Hong Kong Literary* (*Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學), *Hong Kong Literature Study* (*Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論), *Writer* (*Zuojia* 作家), *Hong Kong Literary Circles* (*Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇), and *Reader* (*Dushuren* 讀書人). This can be accessed in full online from the Hong Kong Literature Database (*Xianggang wenxue ziliaoku* 香港文學資料庫).¹⁰ The database was launched in 2000 as part of the Hong Kong Newspaper Literary Supplements Digitization

¹⁰ The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, 'Hong Kong Literature Database', accessed 16 February 2019, http://hklit.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/search_qck_eng.jsp.

Project by the Chinese University of Hong Kong's University Library System, providing access to newspaper and newspaper literary supplements going back to the late 1930s. Apart from providing the digitized supplements the database also serves as an important research platform for scholars, with bibliographical references to monographs, journal and newspaper articles, academic theses and dissertations on Hong Kong literature.

The *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese* (*Xiandai Zhongwen wenxue xuebao* 現代中文文學學報) edited by Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] and published by the Centre for Humanities Research at Lingnan University offers many scholarly articles on Hong Kong literature; for instance Volume 8.2–9.1 (2008) contains many insightful studies on the literary history and characteristics of Hong Kong literature.

While there is a body of academic papers and essays on the Hong Kong southbound literati of the 1950s, to date only a couple of monographs have appeared focusing on the period before 1949. For instance the two-volume anthology *Selected Works of Local and Southbound Writers during the Chinese Civil War Period (1945–1949)* (1999), compiled by the three Hong Kong scholars Zheng, Huang, and Lu, offers a variety of writings from the genre as lyrics, prose, fiction, drama, reportage, and children's literature. A more recent publication by the Hong Kong history professor Zhao Yule 趙雨樂 has the title *Hong Kong Impressions and National Consciousness of Modern Southbound Literati* (*Jindai nanlai wenren de Xianggang yinxiang yu guozu yishi* 近代南來文人的香港印象與國族意識) (2016). The book, funded by the Hong Kong University Grants Committee, examines the relationship between the southbound literati and their sense of national identity against the backdrop of the rise of nationalism from the Qing dynasty to the 1940s. Zhao analyses the intellectuals' impressions of Hong Kong gathered from their poetry, diaries, monographs, and local records, from a historical perspective, concluding that their characteristics and political agenda were different in each century. Overall the book presents the historical and political connection between the Mainland and Hong Kong, and is intended to serve as a reference work for teachers and students at Hong Kong's secondary

schools for research and study purposes.¹¹

There are a few publications on the Hong Kong Bildungsroman of the 1940s and 1950s. Liang Bingjun's 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] paper 'Two Discourses on Colonialism: Huang Guliu and Eileen Chang on the Hong Kong of the Forties' (1998) mentions the Bildungsroman briefly when discussing *The Story of Shrimp Ball*, suggesting that one can also read that novel from the perspective of a Bildungsroman as it depicts 'the protagonist's typical search for the meaning of life in the process of growing up'.¹² A 2012 paper by the scholar Ji Hongfang 計紅芳 titled 'The hardships of growth: A Re-Evaluation of *The Story of Shrimp Ball*' focuses on the characteristics that help the protagonist to grow and mature. Ji argues that the hero has to undergo a series of ordeals and experiences until he eventually understands the meaning and value of life; secondary characters play crucial roles as guiding figures who show him his right path in life.¹³ An essay by Zheng Zhengheng 鄭政恆 mentions the term Bildungsroman when discussing the novel *A Hong's Boyhood*, although he does not go into the features of the genre.¹⁴

Huang Shuxian's 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han] article 'Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s' (2009) offers a more thorough study of the topic and serves as a point of departure for the present thesis.¹⁵ Huang's paper shows

¹¹ See the preface to Zhao Yule 趙雨樂, *Jindai nanlai wenren de Xianggang yinxiang yu guozu yishi 近代南來文人的香港印象與國族意識 (Modern South-Coming Intellectuals' Impression of Hong Kong and Their Nationalist Awareness)*, 1st ed., vol. 1–3 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian youxian gongsi 三聯書店有限公司, 2017), 1–4.

¹² Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Two Discourses on Colonialism: Huang Guliu and Eileen Chang on Hong Kong of the Forties', 82.

¹³ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Chengzhang de jianxin: chongping Huang Guliu de "xiaqiu zhuan" 成長艱辛——重評黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (The Hardships of Growth: A Re-Evaluation of *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', *Wenxue pinglun 文學評論 (Hong Kong Literature Study)*, no. 22 (15 October 2012): 11–14.

¹⁴ Zheng Zhengheng 鄭政恆, 'Li Kuang he tade zuopin 力匡和他的作品 (Li Kuang and His Works)', *Wenxue pinglun 文學評論 (Hong Kong Literature Study)*, no. 21 (15 August 2012): 36.

¹⁵ The Chinese version of the article can be found in Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 'Xianggang lücheng: lun wuling niandai Xianggang chengzhang xiaoshuo de sanzong fangxiang 香港旅程：論五〇年代香港成長小說的三種方向 (Journey to Hong Kong: Three Models of Bildungsroman of Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s)', in *Xianggang wenxue de chuancheng yu zhuanhua 香港文學的傳承與轉化 (Hong Kong Literature: Succession to Tradition and Metamorphosis)*, ed. Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], Chen Zhide 陳智德, and Zheng

how the characteristics of Hong Kong's refugee literature of the 1950s intersect with those of the Western Bildungsroman and proposes reading the refugee novels as a variant of the Bildungsroman by considering 'the diasporic experience of the Mainland immigrants as a journey of growth'.¹⁶ Huang describes it as rather problematic growth, since these Mainland Chinese had to formulate new values and norms after arriving and settling in colonial Hong Kong. Huang's paper introduces three models of the Hong Kong Bildungsroman that emerged in the 1950s and discusses them in terms of the intellectuals' coping strategies and responses to the contradictions they experienced in their new milieu.

This thesis builds on Huang's three models of the Hong Kong Bildungsroman, which are discussed in Chapter 2. It elaborates on the southbound literati's feeling of cultural nationalism, expressed and highlighted as the importance of the ancient intellectual and cultural traditions of China in their work, and illustrates their feeling of alienation from the city and growing resentment of Hong Kong.

Apart from academic discourse on the Bildungsroman in Hong Kong literature, a trend introducing coming-of-age stories appears to have emerged in Hong Kong in the past two years in education and Chinese-language studies. For instance the Children's Literature and Culture Association of Hong Kong launched a project in 2016 introducing the Bildungsroman as study and teaching material in primary and secondary school curricula.¹⁷ Although it promotes a rather broad conception of the genre, including children's literature with a main focus on the growing up of the child, these are termed and translated as 'growing-up stories'. The aim of the project is to promote and improve Chinese-speaking students' language-learning skills. In November 2017 and June 2018 the association

Zhengheng 政恆鄭 (Hong Kong: Huizhi chuban 匯智出版社 (Infolink Publishing House), 2011), 131–50.

¹⁶ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 'Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s', 154.

¹⁷ Huo Yuying 霍玉英, Zhang Shouhong 張壽洪, and Jian Hangan 簡漢乾, 'Xianggang ertong wenxue wenhua xiehui 香港兒童文學文化協會 (Children's Literature and Culture Association of Hong Kong)', Qianyan 前言 (Introduction), accessed 14 February 2019, http://clca.org.hk/noval_intro.html.

launched seminars and lectures on the topic of coming-of-age novels.¹⁸ In addition, an article titled ‘Application of Growing-up Stories as Teaching Materials in Chinese Language Teaching: Questionnaire Survey for Teachers and Students’ (2017) by Zhang Shouhong 張壽洪 [Cheung Sau Hung]¹⁹, and a book intended as a teaching aid, ‘Growing-up Stories: Teaching Practice and Work Guide’ (2018) edited by Huo Yuying 霍玉英, Zhang Shouhong 張壽洪 [Cheung Sau Hung], and Jian Hangan 簡漢乾, have been published.²⁰

Outside Hong Kong many Chinese scholars have published books on the history of Hong Kong literature. As mentioned, particularly in the 1990s there was growing interest in Hong Kong literature on the Mainland. A few of these books were included as sources for this thesis, especially with regard to the southbound literati; for instance Huang Weiliang’s 黃維樑 *An Initial Exploration of Hong Kong Literature (Xianggang wenxue chutan 香港文學初探)* (1987), Pan Yatun 潘亞暉 and Wang Yisheng’s 王義生 *An Overview of Hong Kong Literature (Xianggang wenxue gaiguan 香港文學概觀)* (1993), Wang Jiancong’s 王劍叢 *A History of Hong Kong literature (Xianggang wenxue shi 香港文學史)* (1995), and Huang Fanghua’s 黃方華 *A Hundred Years of Hong Kong Literary History (Bainian Xianggang wenxue shi 百年香港文學史)* (2017). Two Mainland Chinese scholars,

¹⁸ ‘Chengzhang xiaoshuo xue yu jiao yantao hui (Yi) 成長小說學與教研討會（一）(Learning and Teaching Seminar on Coming-of-Age Novels (Part One))’, Facebook, 18 November 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/clcahk/posts/1174053952738943>; ‘Chengzhang xiaoshuo xue yu jiao yantao hui (Er) 成長小說學與教研討會（二）(Learning and Teaching Seminar on Coming-of-Age Novels (Part Two))’, Facebook, 23 June 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/clcahk/photos/a.380327548778258/1313868288757508/?type=3>.

¹⁹ Zhang Shouhong 張壽洪, ‘Yi chengzhang xiaoshuo zuowei yuwenke jiaocai: jiaoshi, xuesheng he jiazhang de yijian pouxi 以成長小說作為語文科教材：教師、學生和家長的意見剖析 (Application of Growing-up Stories as Teaching Materials in Chinese Language Teaching: Questionnaire Survey for Teachers, Students and Parents)’, *Di yi jie yuwen jiaoyu guoji yantao hui 第一屆語文教育國際研討會 (First International Symposium on Language Education (Education University of Hong Kong))*, December 2016.

²⁰ Huo Yuying 霍玉英, Zhang Shouhong 張壽洪, and Jian Hangan 簡漢乾, *Chengzhang xiaoshuo: jiaoxue shijian yu zuopian daodu 成長小說：教學實踐與作品導讀 (Growing-up Stories: Teaching Practice and Guide for Works)* (Hong Kong: Xianggang ertong wenxue wenhua xiehui 香港兒童文學文化協會 Children’s Literature and Culture Association of Hong Kong, 2018), http://clca.org.hk/noval_intro.html.

Ji Hongfang 計紅芳 and Yan Chujun 顏純鈞, who have published papers on the southbound writers, should also be mentioned. Studies of the Chinese Bildungsroman have also been published in English in recent years, for instance the doctoral thesis *Studies on the 20th century Chinese Bildungsroman* (2007) by Xu Xiuming 徐秀明 and Gu Guangmei's 顧廣梅 *A Study on the Modern Chinese Bildungsroman* (2009).

1.3.3 SECONDARY SOURCES IN ENGLISH

The majority of secondary sources of data for this thesis that are in English are compiled by Hong Kong or Chinese scholars. For instance the three essays 'Hong Kong Literature in the Context of modern Chinese Literature' (1987) by Wong Wai-leung, 'Colonialism, the Cold War Era, and Marginal Space: The Existential Conditions of Four Decades of Hong Kong Literature' (1995) by Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], and Esther K. M. Cheung's 'Voices of Negotiation in Late Twentieth-century Hong Kong Literature' (2003) which appeared in *The Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature*, offer a general introduction to Hong Kong literary history.

Scholarly works on Hong Kong literature in the 1950s include Liang Bingjun's 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] essay 'Writing across Borders: Hong Kong's 1950s and the Present' (2009) and Elaine Yee-lin Ho's paper 'Nationalism, Internationalism, the Cold War: Crossing Literary-Cultural Boundaries in 1950s Hong Kong' (2009) provide some useful insights about that era and the historical background.

For further general literature references, see *A Bibliography of Hong Kong Literature in Foreign Language* (2001) edited by Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] and Amanda Yuk-wan Hsu. A compilation of works by Hong Kong writers focusing on Hong Kong and translated into English can be found in the 1988 special issue of the journal *Renditions*.²¹ Edited by Eva Hung and John Minford, this was the first anthology of Hong Kong literature to appear in English.

²¹ Eva Hung and John Minford, eds., 'Special Issue: Hong Kong', *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988).

The anthology *Hong Kong Collage: Contemporary Stories and Writing* by Martha P. Y. Cheung (1998) presents a selection of short stories and essays by Hong Kong writers.

Apart from these, only a couple of English-speaking publications discuss the Bildungsroman genre in modern Chinese literature: Li Hua's monography *Contemporary Chinese Fiction by Su Ton and Yu Hua: Coming of Age Troubled Times* (2011) and Song Mingwei's book *Young China: national rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900–1959* (2015).

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is in two main parts – the methodological and historical background and the analysis – and comprises eight chapters. The focus is on coming-of-age novels written by southbound literati in Hong Kong in the 1950s. It first discusses how the Bildungsroman, which was originally a Western literary genre, came to China in the first decades of the twentieth century. The first part provides an extended methodological introduction and contains a theoretical chapter on the Western Bildungsroman discourse and a discussion of the emergence of the coming-of-age novel in China. The genre was introduced through Chinese translations of Western novels, and promptly found fertile ground in modern Chinese literature. The motifs of the self and of youth became prominent in Chinese discourse, and more importantly, the Western genre accommodated the centuries-old Chinese idea of self-cultivation (*xiuji*) 修己 with its roots in Confucianism. The first part of the thesis introduces Hong Kong literature of the 1950s and its characteristics and analyses the phenomena of the southbound literati, showing the close link between these migrant intellectuals and Hong Kong's literary and publishing sectors.

The second part contains an in-depth analysis of five Hong Kong Bildungsroman works by these migrant literati, showing different literary responses to Hong Kong's specific historical context. The study of these novels includes the three key themes of cultural nationalism, reappropriation of traditional values, and alienation from Hong Kong, which are discussed in light of

the Bildungsroman. The guiding question in this section is what kind of mechanisms the characters in these novels develop in order to adapt and grow in their marginalized and unstable setting in Hong Kong.

The opening chapter, 'Defining the Bildungsroman', gives an outline of the Western Bildungsroman discourse and deals with the term *Bildung* and the origin of the Bildungsroman, with its characteristics and motifs reflecting the relationship between the individual and her/his role in society in many ways.

The second chapter, 'The Literary-Historical Context of the Chinese Bildungsroman', examines the different factors and historical context that gave rise to the Chinese Bildungsroman. It discusses how the Chinese coming-of-age novel is linked to the formation of a modern Chinese literature initiated by the May Fourth intellectuals, who introduced a new notion of selfhood and implemented the trope of youth in their writings.

The third chapter, 'The Cultural and Literary Field in 1950s Hong Kong', focuses on the image of Hong Kong created by the Chinese literati and the connection between the cities of Shanghai and Hong Kong. It offers an examination of the cultural and literary field of 1950s Hong Kong and explores the setting which led to the formation of migrant literature and the prevailing influence of the greenback culture, as well as the promotion of modern literature in Hong Kong. The chapter shows how migrant writers from the Mainland have contributed to the literary field by promoting and translating foreign literature, which in turn facilitated the formation of a local Hong Kong body of literature.

The fourth chapter, 'Northbound or Southbound?' complements the previous chapter by focusing on the migrant intellectuals, the southbound literati who left Mainland China to settle in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong. It discusses their identity, which influenced the motifs and themes in their narratives. They shaped Hong Kong's literary and publishing fields at the time with their strenuous efforts to write and publish their work. These two chapters are the heart of this study and lead on to the second part, which presents a detailed reading and analysis of the five novels: *The Story of Shrimp Ball*; *The Hotel*; *Yindi: A Barcarolle*; *Love at Gulang Island*; and *A Hong's Boyhood*. This second part shows

the (literary) responses and mechanisms created by these writers located at China's margin.

The fifth chapter, 'The Bildungsroman and Cultural Nationalism: Writing for the Homeland', shows how the status of the migrant intellectuals, as mediators and advocates of Chinese culture, propelled the formation of cultural nationalism in Hong Kong, on the periphery of China. It will be argued that the Hong Kong Bildungsromans of the 1950s function as sub-narratives of Chinese nationalism and anti-colonial criticism.

The sixth chapter, 'The Bildungsroman and the Reappropriation of Traditional and Moral Values', examines the setting of Hong Kong in these novels and how the literati's perception of its materialistic culture and highly commercialized society fostered their reappropriation of traditional values, establishing a link to their homeland in times when spiritual guidance was much needed.

The seventh chapter, 'The Bildungsroman and Alienation from Hong Kong and the City', focuses on the images of Hong Kong and cities respectively. In the novels the village and nature are idealized as a place of retreat to a simplicity and honesty which the city is unable to provide. The five Hong Kong novels discussed throughout this thesis respond to the displacement and social and cultural integration of migrant subjects.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology involves a combination of close readings and literary analysis of recent Western- and Chinese-language scholarly works on the Bildungsroman genre, as well as literary theories of adolescent development. No less central is the examination of the historical and cultural contexts of the five selected short stories and novels by southbound literati, as it was against this background that coming-of-age novels were first appeared in instalment fiction.

The focus of this thesis discussing the Bildungsroman genre in colonial Hong Kong is on the protagonists' social situations and the different obstacles they encounter in an unstable and hostile environment. The authors challenge

the cultural and social contradictions of the day with their coming-of-age stories. The notion of the Western Bildungsroman is tested in light of and against a range of theories addressing the individual's transition to modernity and (post-)coloniality. Flagging its principal concerns, the study describes the different approaches to the Bildungsroman genre of scholars such as M. Bakhtin, Jerome Buckley, Jed Esty, Todd Kontje, and Franco Moretti.

2 DEFINING THE BILDUNGSROMAN

Den Stoff sieht jedermann vor sich,
den Gehalt findet nur der, der etwas dazu zu tun hat,
und die Form ist ein Geheimnis den meisten.
— Goethe¹

The following chapter begins with a discussion of various philosophers' concept of *Bildung* and gives an outline of the most recent *Bildungsroman* criticism and its controversies. Further, it will elaborate on the genre's formal characteristics and some recurring motifs. It also shows different approaches and questions that have been raised by literary scholars in order to grasp the notion of the genre. And lastly, it will discuss a few important variants of coming-of-age stories by marginalized writers and go beyond the Western *Bildungsroman* discourse by sketching out some current trends in Asia.

2.1 Origin of the term and the concept of *Bildung* and *Bildungsroman*

This section introduces the concept of *Bildung*, presents the historical background to the *Bildungsroman*, and gives a brief overview of the initial debate about the genre.

The term 'Bildungsroman' was coined by Karl von Morgenstern (1770–1852), a professor of aesthetics and literature, about two decades after the publication of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795/96). Wilhelm

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: Berliner Ausgabe. Kunsttheoretische Schriften und Übersetzungen (Band 17–22)*, ed. Michael Holzinger, vol. 18 (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1966), 36 Kunst und Altertum, Bd. 5, H. 3, 1826 (Maximen und Reflexionen Nr. 289).

Dilthey (1833–1911) later discussed Goethe's novel in terms of the Bildungsroman, elevating the novel to something of a model and a yardstick for later generations of coming-of-age stories, a status that it continues to hold. Dilthey argues that the Bildungsroman differs from the biographical novel in the way that it depicts 'consciously and artfully the human in general in a circle of life', and in particular, how a 'regulated development within the life of the individual is observed'. In accordance with the prevalent philosophy of historicism in late nineteenth century, which was dedicated to revise historical paradigms, he insists that 'each [of these] stages has its own intrinsic value, and is at the same time the basis for a higher stage. The dissonances and conflicts of life appear as the necessary passage points through which the individual must pass on his way to maturity and harmony'.² In other words Dilthey considers the endpoint of the Bildungsroman to be the fulfilment and harmony in which personal development culminates. More importantly, by assigning this core function to fiction in the process of national subject-formation, Dilthey contributes significantly to the (re)construction of a German literary canon.³

Literary criticism has continually elaborated on the notion of *Bildung* and its applicability across the various epochs and literatures.⁴ When the term *Bildung* and the genre Bildungsroman were coined and used, an ongoing debate began about the different meanings. Ernst Lichtenstein, for instance, traces the term *Bildung* and its etymological origin back in his *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Historical Dictionary of Philosophy)⁵ and notes that despite the widespread assumption that the term has humanistic and pedagogical connotations, it originally belonged to the mystic-theological and natural

² Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (Wiesbaden: Vieweg+Teubner Verlag, 1922), 395, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-663-16183-7>.

³ Todd Curtis Kontje, *The German Bildungsroman: History of a National Genre*, 1st ed., Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture. Literary Criticism in Perspective (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1993), X.

⁴ Rolf Selbmann, *Der deutsche Bildungsroman*, 2nd ed., Sammlung Metzler, Bd. 214 (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1994), 15f.

⁵ Ernst Lichtenstein, 'Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie. Bd. 10, Bd. 10', in '*Bildung*', ed. Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel (Basel: Schwabe, 1999).

philosophical-notional semantic field.⁶ In fact the term *Bildung*, which translates as ‘formation’, ‘education’, ‘culture’, became prevalent in Germany between 1770 and 1830 with the emergence of a modern education system. Lichtenstein notes that the term became somewhat of ‘a leitmotif framed by a bourgeois upper class, the ‘intelligentsia’, which in a historical context had transitioned to an open society that facilitated a socially-enabled ideal of mental individuality, a liberal social life, and ideologically normative self-determination’.⁷ This development, which led to a new notion of childhood and new understanding of the pedagogical power of *Bildung*, is apparent in, for instance, Jean Jacques Rousseaus’ *Émile ou la De l’éducation* (1762).⁸

Klaus Vondung’s study ‘Unity through Bildung: A Dream of Perfection’ (1988) outlines the German term and concept of *Bildung* in connection with the symbol of unity which spanned the entire nineteenth century from German idealism to World War I, although Vondung emphasizes the importance of the primary sources rather than focusing on the philosophical concept. He concludes that *Bildung* gained meaning through the ‘desperate effort to force unity’ in the

⁶ Lichtenstein; on the *Humanitätsideal* at the time see Martin Swales, ‘Irony and the Novel: Reflections on the German Bildungsroman’, in *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman*, ed. James N. Hardin (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 49.

⁷ Lichtenstein, “Bildung.” ‘... zum Leitbegriff eines in der geschichtlichen Situation des Übergangs zu einer offenen Gesellschaft sozial ermöglichten Ideals geistiger Individualität, freier Geselligkeit und ideennormativer Selbstbestimmung einer bürgerlichen Oberschicht, der “Gebildeten.”’ In this regard, if the individual is given the opportunity and the freedom to explore the world, only then can he come to a ‘free’ understanding that enables him to liberate himself from social restrictions, as in Goethe’s Faust II, where Faust realises at the end of his *Bildungsreise* that a journey opens the way for self-exploration and *Menschbildung*: ‘Ich bin nur durch die Welt gerannt / Ein jed’ Gelüst ergriff ich bei den Haaren, / Was nicht genügte ließ ich fahren, / Was mir entwischte ließ ich ziehn. / Ich habe nur begehrt und nur vollbracht, / Und abermals gewünscht, und so mit Macht / Mein Leben durchgestürzt; erst groß und mächtig, / Nun aber geht es weise, geht bedächtig. / Der Erdenkreis ist mir genug bekannt. / ... ’ See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust. Die Tragödie Zweiter Teil* (Stuttgart, 1832), 315, http://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/book/view/goethe_faust02_1832?p=327. In the same way the reader should come to the same realisation. In a letter to Goethe from Friedrich Schiller, the latter points out that ‘you wish the reader himself to discover more than you directly impart to him’ (‘Sie wollten freilich den Leser mehr selbst finden lassen, als ihn geradezu zu belehren.’). See letter from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe*, 8 July 1796 (Jazzybee Verlag, 2016), 131. The English translation is taken from Friedrich Schiller, *Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe, from 1794 to 1805. Translated by George H. Calvert. Putnam*, (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1845), 164.

⁸ See Florian Schippmann, *Die Entdeckung der Kindheit im 18. Jahrhundert* (GRIN Verlag, 2010).

first place, although later, due to its inflationary use, the concept ceased to hold any meaning or value.⁹

Rolf Selbmann, discussing the semantic transformation of the term in the eighteenth to twentieth century, considers the term *Bildung* untranslatable, although the subject behind it is not. According to Selbmann, *Bildung* was reinvented in each era to fit its needs, particularly since the mid-eighteenth century when the term became secular and its theological meaning started to fade. The most significant shift happened in the eighteenth century during the Enlightenment and the period of the Weimar Classicists, when Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Friedrich Schiller added further semantic layers, emphasizing the individual's and teleological growth and maturity of a person. A dimension of political morality was added to the concept from 1800, which later led to Wilhelm von Humboldt's 'Bildungspessimismus' (educational pessimism), Johann Gottlieb Fichte's 'Nationalbildung' (nation-building), and Friedrich Nietzsche's 'kulturpessimistischer Bildungskritik' (cultural-pessimistic educational criticism).¹⁰

2.2 On the generic definition and its controversy

The next section charts the scholarly discussion of the *Bildungsroman* genre. Apart from the controversy about the ambiguity and applicability of the generic term, many questions have been raised in terms of the teleological structure and the marked ending of the novel, whether the success or failure of the hero's integration into society defines the Bildungsroman, and which particular functions and characteristics have been discussed by literary criticism.

In his early-1980s study *Wilhelm Meister und seine Brüder: Untersuchungen zum deutschen Bildungsroman*, Jürgen Jacob argues that the Bildungsroman became a 'unfulfilled genre' (*unerfüllte Gattung*) with the

⁹ Klaus Vondung, 'Unity through Bildung: A German Dream of Perfection', *Independent Journal of Philosophy* 5/6 (1988): 47–55.

¹⁰ Selbmann, *Der deutsche Bildungsroman*, 1–6.

publication of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*, which he calls 'a novel of disillusionment'. *Wilhelm Meister*, and particularly the protagonist's stage-by-stage development, set a standard for an entire genre that subsequent novels were unable to meet. The genre is therefore, in Jacob's opinion, 'unfulfilled'.¹¹

Jeffrey Sammons and Marc Redfield discuss the genre as a historical phantom that only could have existed in nineteenth-century Germany. In a 1981 paper 'The Mystery of the Missing Bildungsroman, or What Happened to Wilhelm Meister's Legacy?' Sammons states that he is unable to locate the genre and that studies have shown a rather 'conflicted and diffuse scholarly situation'. Sammons observes a discrepancy between the generic definition and its literary canon, for which the latter basically does not exist: '[t]he term itself, with its rather elaborate and heavily charged connotations, ought to have some relevance to the character of the texts it claims to subsume; and it ought to subsume more than two or three or even a half-dozen texts, especially if large claims are made as to its literary-historical dominance and social representativeness.' For Sammons it is a 'phantom genre,' an invention of the early twentieth century by Wilhelm Dilthey, and later by Thomas Mann who propagated the Bildungsroman as a genuine and characteristic German literary form. Sammons is not convinced of its post-Goethe-existence, noting that 'there is no nineteenth-century Bildungsroman genre because no major writer after Goethe could envision a social context for *Bildung*'.¹² In a later article, 'The Bildungsroman for Nonspecialists: An Attempt at a Clarification' in 1991, Sammons revisits the topic, stressing that the genre and its original concept of *Bildung* are both embedded in the humanistic ideal, i.e. 'the early bourgeois, humanistic concept of the shaping of the individual self from its innate potentials through acculturation and social

¹¹ Jürgen Jacobs, *Wilhelm Meister und seine Brüder: Untersuchungen zum deutschen Bildungsroman*, 2nd ed. (München: Fink, 1983), 271–78. See final chapter 'The Bildungsroman. Eine unerfüllte Gattung'.

¹² Jeffrey L. Sammons, 'The Mystery of the Missing Bildungsroman, or: What Happened to Wilhelm Meister's Legacy?', ed. Jackson I. Cope and Geoffrey Green, *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 14 14, no. 2 (1981): 239–40; 241.

experience to the threshold of maturity' and that it is, after all, an 'intensely bourgeois concept'.¹³

Redfield traces the term back, pointing out in *Phantom Formations* (1996) that 'the idea of *Bildung* is an idea about the historical realization of *Bildung*'. The term bears several layers of meaning and concepts, revealing a polysemous character.¹⁴ As for the notion of the paradigmatic Bildungsroman genre, its narrative 'exemplifies the ideological construction of literature by criticism'.¹⁵ Redfield argues that it is 'the exemplary genre of humanity's auto-production,' a 'representing-itself-to-itself' that implies a 'process or historicity [consisting of] its ongoing identification with an identity that is its own'.¹⁶ In Redfield's view, the Bildungsroman becomes a genre that is connected to a self-referential aesthetic with an ideology behind it and that by reading the Bildungsroman narratives as 'the acculturation of a self – the integration of a particular "I" into the general subjectivity of a community, and thus, finally, into the universal subjectivity of humanity – the genre can be said to repeat, as its identity or content, its own synthesis of particular instance and form'.¹⁷

In spite of academic discussion on this, which Sammons has called a 'definitional conundrum', great effort has also been made generally to tackle the problematic status of the genre. Sammons discerns three different approaches by

¹³ Jeffrey L. Sammons, 'The Bildungsroman for Nonspecialists: An Attempt at a Clarification', in *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman*, ed. James N. Hardin (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 41–42. Wulf Koepke makes a similar point when discussing the novels by Jean Paul: 'It is to a high degree a process of acculturation, of adapting to existing societal structures' and sees *Bildung* as connected 'with transformation of self and society, and with creativity'. See Wulf Koepke, 'Bildung and the Transformation of Society: Jean Paul's *Titan* and *Flegeljahre*', in *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman*, ed. James N. Hardin (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 231.

¹⁴ Marc Redfield, *Phantom Formations: Aesthetic Ideology and the Bildungsroman* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 48–49. Besides the various translations and concepts behind *Bildung*, the term encompasses both meanings the cultivation of a person's character and the importance of educational and cultural formation. 'Since this process can be influenced from outside as well as spring independently from an inborn potential, *Bildung* comprises both planned education and independent self-realization. See Vondung, 'Unity through Bildung: A German Dream of Perfection', 47.

¹⁵ Redfield, *Phantom Formations*, VII.

¹⁶ Redfield, 49.

¹⁷ Redfield, 38.

Bildungsroman critics: first, the inductive strategy; second, expansion of the Bildungsroman corpus, and lastly the tightening of the genre, although he sees none of these as able to provide an optimal definition of the genre.¹⁸

To Hartmut Steinecke, the Bildungsroman is mainly to be read and understood in its socio-political context, although such novels do not portray a society as a whole but 'rather [concentrate] more and more on a single stratum of society, the bourgeoisie'.¹⁹ Wilhelm von Humboldt believed in the concept of social mobility and formulated it for the aesthetic education of the middle class.²⁰ Consequently, the concepts and values of a particular social class, whether the bourgeoisie or the middle class, also play a crucial role in the analysis of the Bildungsroman.²¹

The Bildungsroman is credited with pedagogical power: the model of the positive hero in socialist realism resembles the Bildungsroman protagonist, both serving as role models for the reader via their views and behaviour. According to Giovanna Summerfield and Lisa Downward, who observe that the Bildungsroman can project the hero's spiritual growth onto the reader, '[its] aim is to affect the reader's personal growth as well; the reader, in effect, learns from the situation before the protagonist or otherwise compares his or her own

¹⁸ Jeffrey L. Sammons, 'Heuristic Definition and the Constraints of Literary History: Some Recent Discourse on the Bildungsroman in English and German', in *Dazwischen. Zum Transitorischen Denken in Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft - Festschrift Für Johannes Anderegg Zum 65. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2003), 173–82.

¹⁹ Hartmut Steinecke, 'The Novel and the Individual: The Significance of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister in the Debate about the Bildungsroman', in *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman*, ed. James N. Hardin (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 84, 87. For Moretti, Bildungsromans have the tendency to portray middle-class heroes. In fact the middle class represents social mobility and fluidity, whereas the upper and lower classes are stable and change only slowly. See Franco Moretti, 'From the Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture', in *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 564. Summerfield and Downward share the same view by stating that the protagonist usually belongs to 'the bourgeoisie, the class most conducive to the mobility necessary for the process of *Bildung*'. See Giovanna Summerfield and Lisa Downward, *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, Continuum Literary Studies Series (London: Continuum, 2010), 170.

²⁰ Susan L. Cocalis, 'The Transformation of "Bildung" from an Image to an Ideal', *Monatshefte* 70, no. 4 (1978): 406f.

²¹ Steinecke, 'The Novel and the Individual: The Significance of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister in the Debate about the Bildungsroman', 88.

morality against the moral of the story that the hero eventually learns'.²² Moreover the reader, as Thomas Jeffers argues, compares his or her world view with that of the protagonist and goes through every life stage with them: '[w]e are meant to first perceive the world as Wilhelm does, then entertain his ideas as imaginative possibilities, and finally formulate critical ideas for ourselves. We grow – all over again, quite possibly – as we double the hero's apprenticeship'.²³ Redfield draws an essential distinction between Bildungsroman and *Erziehungsroman* (educational novel).²⁴ The latter focuses on the educational process and its norms and standards, and as Jacobs puts it *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft* (Encyclopaedia of German Literary Studies); the *Erziehungsroman* is 'a portrayal of a development process guided by educational authorities and focuses on pedagogical problems'.²⁵

However, in 'The Fiction of Humanity' (1982) Michael Beddow examines six German Bildungsromans in which he believes that 'fictional constructions give access to truths beyond themselves', by which these narratives carry out a function 'which creates an additional narrative plane over and above the one on which the novel claims to offer the history of an individual's development. On this additional plane we are invited to view the entire narrative ... as a piece of fiction, a fiction which requires of us a response that includes awareness of reading an imaginative construction, rather than an empirically accurate representation'. As a result, Beddow says, 'the narrative of the hero's experiences ... offers insights into human nature which could not be adequately conveyed either in the form of discursive arguments or through a rigorously mimetic, non-self-conscious fictional work'.²⁶

²² Summerfield and Downward, *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, 82.

²³ Thomas L. Jeffers, *Apprenticeships: The Bildungsroman from Goethe to Santayana* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 9.

²⁴ Redfield, *Phantom Formations*, 54.

²⁵ Jürgen Jacobs, 'Bildungsroman', in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft: Neubearbeitung des Reallexikons der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, ed. Klaus Weimar, 3rd. ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 230. 'Auf pädagogische Probleme orientierte Darstellung eines von Erziehungsinstanzen gesteuerten Entwicklungsprozesses'.

²⁶ Michael Beddow, *The Fiction of Humanity: Studies in the Bildungsroman from Wieland to Thomas Mann*, *Anglica Germanica*. Series 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 286, 5.

Fritz Martini's (1991) paper 'Bildungsroman: Term and Theory' outlines Karl von Morgenstern's notion of the Bildungsroman based on three lectures he gave highlighting the setting in the novel that affect and facilitate the hero's development and formation (*Bildung*). Certain events help the protagonist to mature and grow. This stands in opposition to the epic, in which the protagonist actively influences his or her present surroundings. Martini mentions that Karl von Morgenstern, seeing the practical and pedagogical responsibility that is attributed to the Bildungsroman and pointing out the close connection between author and work, upon which he makes 'a connection to philosophy, to morality, to "life"' and whose form could be 'understood less as "literature" and more as a direct expression of the author, as a confession and document of life, as a depiction of his own individuality and nation. Thus, the Bildungsroman is given full freedom to include philosophical reflection, the diary, and the memoir, be it biography or autobiography'.²⁷

Tobias Boes discerns two different camps of critics of the Bildungsroman, which he calls the essentialists and the universalists. To essentialists, the Bildungsroman reveals a specific characteristic of the German nation and therefore could not have flourished elsewhere, whereas universalists detects 'themes of universal human significance' in the coming-of-age novel.²⁸

2.3 Formal characteristics, subject matter, and motifs

This section discusses the formal characteristics and central themes that are considered typical of the Bildungsroman; it also shows that the female's trajectory differs from that of the male, since a different set of possibilities and choices are available to the heroine. It is important to note that embarking on a journey and the roles of minor characters generally contribute to the

²⁷ Fritz Martini, 'Bildungsroman: Term and Theory', in *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman*, ed. James N. Hardin (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 20f., 24.

²⁸ Tobias Boes, *Formative Fictions: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Bildungsroman*, Signale: Modern German Letters, Cultures, and Thought (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2012), 12.

Bildungsroman protagonist's growth and are therefore necessary as part of a successful integration into society.

In the Chinese context, *Bildung* as the notion of formation and its stage-by-stage development are not new and can be traced back to Chinese philosophy. Confucius (551–479) is the author of his own personal Bildungsroman when he draws the pattern of a successful *Bildung* in his *Analects*: '[a]t fifteen, I set my mind upon learning; at thirty, I took my place in society; at forty, I became free of doubts; at fifty, I understood Heaven's Mandate; at sixty, my ear was attuned; and at seventy, I could follow my heart's desires without overstepping the bounds of propriety'.²⁹ On his spiritual life-path he becomes, stage by stage, a morally complete person who has found his place in the world and society. This final stage is characterized by the convergence of the individual's potentiality and social reality.

The question of whether any or which of these seemingly obvious characteristics are applicable to the Bildungsroman genre has been raised many times. Two 1976 letters to the editor of the Publications of the Modern Language Association of America (PMLA), for instance, show that it is almost impossible to agree on generic characteristics. They are published under the heading 'Defining Bildungsroman as a Genre', which discusses David Miles's article 'The Picaro's Journey to the Confessional: The Changing Image of the Hero in the German Bildungsroman' (1974). Marianne H. Gottfried's letter criticizes Miles' ambiguous definition ('so broad as to be useless') and his failure to mention specific characteristics of the Bildungsroman, and, more importantly, the blurry line that he draws between the Bildungsroman and the picaresque novel. Miles, in return, argues that in his view, a genre – and this applies to the Bildungsroman, the picaresque, and the confessional novel – is not a static, unchanging form. He understands the genre as a fluid form, and the two types of fiction are, in spite of their formal differences, not necessarily mutually exclusive.³⁰

²⁹ See Qiu Kong and Edward Slingerland, *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis, IN.: Hackett Pub. Co., 2003), 8.

³⁰ Marianne Hirsch Gottfried and David H. Miles, 'Defining Bildungsroman as a Genre', *PMLA* 91, no. 1 (1976): 122–23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/461404>.

All in all there is no consensus among Bildungsroman critics either on the defining characteristics of the genre or on whether the Bildungsroman ends with the protagonist's maturity and integration into society. It seems that finding common ground that brings the genre's (structural) form and content together is the problem.³¹ For Marc Redfield, who also points out Dilthey's content-orientated definition, form and content cannot be dealt with individually since 'the "content" of the Bildungsroman instantly becomes a question of form, precisely because the content is the forming-of-content, "Bildung" – the formation of the human as the producer of itself as form'.³² As such, *Bildung* is in fact a poetical form.³³

Speaking of the genre canon, Jed Esty states that it can 'be loosened to include almost any novel where experience trumps innocence or is tightened to a fine point where no novel fits'.³⁴ However, according to Susan L. Cocalis, criticism of the Bildungsroman in general defines the genre in terms of content over form due to the lack of a generic definition of the form.³⁵

Attempts have been made to include both form and content, and to narrow down the distinctive characteristics that define the genre. In her doctoral thesis 'Change and Continuity: The Bildungsroman in English' (2009) Anniken Iversen creates a Bildungsroman index based on a selection of formal features and themes such as narration and focalization, characters and characterization, topical story elements, setting, plot and structure, generic signals, theme, subject

³¹ Although Klaus Vondung believes that the concept of *Bildung* was aligned with form, structure, and content throughout the nineteenth century. See Vondung, 'Unity through Bildung: A German Dream of Perfection', 48.

³² Redfield, *Phantom Formations*, 42.

³³ The poetical stands in contrast to reality, as it has been pointed out by Morgenstern that there is on the one hand, the inner world, 'the world which the noble carries in his pure and vast heart ('die Welt, die der Edle im reinen, weiten Herzen trägt') and on the other hand, reality, 'the other, the real world' ('eine andere, die wirkliche Welt'). See Karl Morgenstern, 'Bruchstück einer den 12./24. Dec. 1810 in Dorpat im Hauptsaal der Kaiserl. Universität öffentlich gehaltenen Vorlesung über den Geist und Zusammenhang einer Reihe philosophischer Romane', in *Dörptische Beyträge für Freunde der Philosophie, Literatur und Kunst*, ed. Karl Morgenstern (Dorpat, Leipzig: Karl Morgenstern [in Commission bey P. G. Kummer], 1821), 181.

³⁴ Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development*, Modernist Literature & Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 17.

³⁵ Cocalis, 'The Transformation of "Bildung" from an Image to an Ideal'.

matter, and motifs. By describing and listing these typical features she is able to pinpoint some novels that she categorizes as classic Bildungsromans.³⁶

The very fact that there are only limited examples of the prototypical Bildungsroman calls into question how novels which emerged in subsequent periods and guided by their own *Bildungsprinzipien* (developmental principle) should be approached.³⁷ Martini asserts that 'it also became evident later that the Bildungsroman can hardly be isolated as a specific "literary" genre with formal structural laws applying solely to it; it is rather determined by prerequisites that have to do with content, theme, ideology, and with its intended effect and function'.³⁸

2.3.1 Gender and Genre: Development of the female character

The female character plays a principal role in three of the five coming-of-age novels discussed in the second part of this thesis. This section introduces the development of the female Bildungsroman protagonist and discusses it in terms of the elements that are essential to her path of *Bildung* and growth.

The essays in *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (1983) discuss the development of female protagonists in the Bildungsroman and draw a clear distinction between male and female growing up and coming of age respectively. Abel, Hirsch and Langland provide a general definition of the Bildungsroman which points out the 'interplay of psychological and social forces' and moreover, 'successful *Bildung* requires the existence of a social context that will facilitate the unfolding of inner capacities, leading the young person from ignorance and innocence to wisdom and maturity'. The protagonist's growth and development depend on many external elements, making the Bildungsroman 'a relative concept colored by many interrelated factors, including class, history, and gender'; it is precisely the latter that 'modifies every aspect of a particular Bildungsroman: its narrative structure, its implied psychology, its

³⁶ Anniken Telnes Iversen, 'Change and Continuity: The Bildungsroman in English' (doctoral dissertation, University of Tromsø, 2009), 51–65.

³⁷ Cocalis, 'The Transformation of "Bildung" from an Image to an Ideal', 399, 411.

³⁸ Martini, 'Bildungsroman: Term and Theory', 24.

representations of social pressures'. In the female coming-of-age story the heroine travels a different path of development to that of her male counterpart, to whom another set of choices and social options are offered. Unlike Bildungsromans with male protagonists, 'female fictions of development reflect the tensions between the assumptions of a genre that embodies male norms and the values of its female protagonists'.³⁹

Esther K. Labovitz finds in her study of the female Bildungsroman that the heroine of the novels arrives belatedly due to limitations, constraints, and restrictions. More importantly, the Bildungsroman is often considered in malecentric terms, and female growth commonly stands in comparison and contrast to male development. Labovitz observes two characteristics that accompanied the entrance of the female novels into the genre and which differ from the structure of the male Bildungsroman. First, the heroine grows through *Bildung* gained from her life experience rather than from *a priori* decisions and life lessons.⁴⁰ Second, with the emergence of the female Bildungsroman comes an 'unconventional and rebellious heroine'. The latter plays a crucial role, since 'individual rebellion defines the lives of each of the heroines. ... As rebels, and feminists, the heroines of the female Bildungsroman challenge the very structure of society, raising questions of equality, not only of class, but of the sexes as well'. Furthermore, it is also up to them to change 'the structure of society, the family, and relationships between male and female', in which she witnesses 'the destruction of stereotypical roles'. Yet comparing male and female protagonists' sexuality and sexual identity, 'the female heroine ... must first "assail her

³⁹ Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland, *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1983), 4–6, 11.

⁴⁰ Labovitz does not elaborate at this point how one is distinct from another. From what she says about female *Bildung*, one can only assume that the female protagonist has to make much more effort than her male counterpart to free herself from patriarchy and social restrictions. The heroines of the novels she discusses in her book start their development with 'a search for a self lost with childhood', whereas the male protagonist in contrast 'starts off with a sense of self'. Also the female quest is determined by individual rebellion, which 'defines the lives of each of the heroines, ranging from attitudes on marriage, children, careers, literature, and even clothes'. The active rebellion of the female heroine of the Bildungsroman may be seen as her actual life experience. See Esther Kleinbord Labovitz, *The Myth of the Heroine: The Female 'Bildungsroman' in the Twentieth Century: Dorothy Richardson, Simone de Beauvoir, Doris Lessing, Christa Wolf*, American University Studies General Literature (New York, Berne, Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1986), 248, 251.

womanhood” before she can define herself and her true role in society. Her risk is permanent exile and ostracization as the penalty for rebellion and questioning the role that the society has assigned to women’, whereas the male hero encounters fewer obstacles in his life path and his rebellion against society is to be expected. Labovitz also finds common traits in the women in the four coming-of-age novels she discusses: ‘the loss of self, efforts to gain control over their own minds, to win their freedom without hindrance, and to further their self-development’.⁴¹

Camilla Brändström’s thesis on female development in two English Bildungsromans follows the heroines’ trajectories, which are, compared to the males’, rather traditional. She points out several distinctive and striking characteristics such as the lack of a journey and therefore circular development (leaves the parents’ house and ends up in her husband’s house), the time of marriage, and the duration of the protagonist’s development. Sexuality is an important part of the female’s growing up and has a different role to that of the male hero. Her sexual initiation may be liberating, and she may free herself of inhibiting familial bonds by using her sexuality as a weapon.⁴²

2.3.2 *The journey into the world and into oneself*

Jerome H. Buckley’s article ‘Autobiography in the English Bildungsroman’ (1970) intrinsically links the Bildungsroman with autobiography, and for this reason he calls it the ‘autobiographical novel’. Tracing the autobiographical elements of English novels, he admits that not all of them feature all the key elements of the genre. However, he finds striking parallels between the Bildungsroman and the biographies of authors themselves, outlining some common characteristics: ‘[a]ll of these knew some considerable degree of alienation. All were forced at some stage to cope with the harsh necessities of materialistic economy. To all of them the Bildungsroman was apparently the familiar and available vehicle in which to

⁴¹ Labovitz, 246–48, 251–52.

⁴² Camilla Brändström, ‘Gender and Genre : A Feminist Exploration of the Bildungsroman in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Martha Quest*’ (University of Gävle, 2009), 2, 6–7, 14, 51.

explore at the safe removal of fiction a spiritual development strikingly like their own'. And money plays a decisive role in the hero's journey: almost every protagonist finds him- or herself exposed to material economy. In fact money symbolizes urban and often cruel materialism.⁴³ The young hero is receptive to any external influence, in particular when coming from the provinces to a city that promises infinite possibilities. The city plays a double role in many cases, i.e. as 'the agent of liberation and a source of corruption'. In a later study, *Season of Youth* (1974), Buckley emphasizes the crucial stage of childhood in the Bildungsroman as a blank space in which possibilities can unfold as 'the child [is] an entity in himself responsive to experiences that might alter the entire direction of his growing mind and eventually influence for better or for worse his whole maturity'.⁴⁴

In Jeffrey Sammons' opinion it does not matter whether 'the process of *Bildung* succeeds or fails, whether the protagonist achieves an accommodation with life and society or not': what matters is 'a sense of evolutionary change within the self, a teleology of individuality'.⁴⁵ Martin Swales shares the same view, noting that a harmonious ending is not required since the novels are written for 'the sake of the journey – and not for the sake of the happy ending which that journey seems to promise'.⁴⁶ The voyage on which the hero embarks also bears deeper meanings: the interdependence between the protagonist's outer and inner realms that is reflected in the voyage, '[reproducing] the classical model of the recovery of the social order as a reflection of a cosmic order, of the conscious recovery of that which is inside oneself'. Exploration of the outer realm also shows the protagonist's ability as a mature individual and a social member. As a matter of fact, 'the voyages (*Bildungsreisen*) are demonstrations of those

⁴³ Buckley, 'Autobiography in the English Bildungsroman', 94.

⁴⁴ Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth: The 'Bildungsroman' from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge MA, London: Harvard University Press, 1975), 19–20. Buckley also calls this stage the "space between" and thereby referring to a note by John Keats that says: 'The imagination of a boy is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted...' Quoted in Buckley, 1.

⁴⁵ Sammons, 'The Bildungsroman for Nonspecialists: An Attempt at a Clarification', 41.

⁴⁶ Swales, 'Irony and the Novel: Reflections on the German Bildungsroman', 53.

possibility for upward mobility'.⁴⁷ While the protagonist reaches out for an extended outer world it affects his/her inner growth and enables his/her social mobility. Moreover, according to Jost the 'the whole voyage [depicted in *Wilhelm Meister*] represents a full human experience'.⁴⁸ The journey is a crucial part of the growing process, and embarking on a journey is a way for the hero to find himself: as Heinz Hillmann puts it, 'only when the hero moves away from home and is out in the world does he find himself'.⁴⁹

2.3.3 *The function of secondary characters*

In the Bildungsroman the path of the hero and the events of the narrative follow a linear plot which the reader can anticipate from the very beginning. The path and the goal are set before the protagonist embarks on his journey in the Bildungsroman. The reader assumes the meaning of the events narrated in the story in retrospect. Peter Brooks has described this as 'anticipation of retrospection': 'if the past is to be read as present, it is a curious present that we know to be past in relation to a future we know to be already in place, already in wait for us to reach it'.⁵⁰ Building on this observation, the external elements discussed in the following section can be considered an essential part of the plot by which the protagonist can convincingly achieve the proleptic goal.

In general, studies of the Bildungsroman point out the crucial meaning of the setting and the secondary characters. The settings in a novel, however, are crucial and necessary for the protagonist's growth and maturity. They include elements such as the hero embarking on a journey, mentors who provide guidance, the ordeals of love and death. More importantly, the protagonist's development relies on external factors, for instance, the secondary characters in

⁴⁷ Summerfield and Downward, *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, 82.

⁴⁸ François Jost, 'Variations of a Species: The Bildungsroman', *Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures* 37, no. 2 (1983): 128.

⁴⁹ 'Wenn der Held von zu Hause wegzieht, wenn er auszieht in die Welt, kommt er erst zu sich.' See Heinz Hillmann and Peter Hühn, *Der europäische Entwicklungsroman in Europa und Übersee: Literarische Lebensentwürfe der Neuzeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), 30.

⁵⁰ See Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, 1st ed., Borzoi Books (New York: Knopf, 1984), 23.

the novels who play an essential role in his or her growing process. They serve as guiding figures and examples of ways of life which the protagonist can either follow or reject, adding to a set of options and possibilities at a point where fate appears as chance for the hero to grasp.

Thomas Jeffers points out the crucial role of the secondary character and the setting in terms of the hero's growth: 'these other people are plainly subordinate', but 'their job is to water, fertilize, and prune the growing "plant," the *Bildungsheld* [the hero], whose nursery is the world', on the other.⁵¹

Apart from secondary characters, literature and the arts are essential elements that affect the protagonist's growing process. Employed as external forces, they help to shape the individual because 'Bildung includes socialization through art and literature, although in a way that it first impacts on the subject and appears to be the original identity in retrospect'.⁵²

Martin Swales mentions the side plot, which he considers a substantial part of the whole story since it suggests that 'the adventures that befall the hero and the people he meets are significant insofar as they strike an answering chord in him, as they are part of his potentiality'. It is important to note that 'secondary characters are allowed to disappear and reappear in a remarkable providential way; they are rarely "lost" because they are relatable to the hero's potentiality'. Their actions and decisions are interlinked with the main character, and 'the Bildungsroman, with its concern for the *Werden* [growth] of an individual, is able to redeem the prosaic facticity of the given social world by relating it to the inner potentialities of the hero'.⁵³

⁵¹ Jeffers, *Apprenticeships*, 35.

⁵² Heinz Hillmann and Peter Hühn, *Der europäische Entwicklungsroman in Europa und Übersee: Literarische Lebensentwürfe der Neuzeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), 16. 'Bildung ist Sozialisation durch Kunst und Literatur, aber so, daß [sic] was auf diese Weise erst in das Subjekt hereingewirkt hat, nachträglich als ursprüngliche Identität erscheint.'

⁵³ Martin Swales, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse*, Princeton Essays in Literature (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 23, 30.

2.4 Tension between the individual's potentiality and social reality

This section discusses the relationship between the individual and society as portrayed in the Bildungsroman. The period of growth and development holds considerable tension since the individual's potentiality often appears to contradict social reality. For this reason one might assert that the genre's principal characteristic is the depiction of the significant correlation between the individual and its social world. This is also, generally the novel's distinguishing characteristic, which, as the literary critic Northrop Freye asserts, 'tends to be extroverted and personal; its chief interest is in human character as it manifests itself in society'.⁵⁴

Tracing the structure of the prototypical Bildungsroman of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, one can, Georg Lukács, find it aesthetically and historico-philosophically located between two kinds of plot figuration with a subject-matter that shows the '... reconciliation of the problematic individual driven by deeply felt ideals with concrete social realities'. Based on this, the reality and the outer world consist of profession, status, and class which altogether determine the protagonist's social action.⁵⁵ The Bildungsroman mirrors the tension between individual and society with its focus on the hero's growth. Martin Swales observes that 'in its portrayal of the hero's psychology the Bildungsroman operates with a tension between a concern for the sheer complexity of individual potentiality on the one hand, and on the other, a recognition that practical reality – marriage, family, a career – is a necessary dimension of the hero's self-realization, albeit one that by definition implies a limitation, indeed a constriction,

⁵⁴ Northrop Frye and Robert D. Denham, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, Collected Works of Northrop Frye (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 288.

⁵⁵ '... die Versöhnung des problematischen, vom erlebten Ideal geführten Individuums mit der konkreten, gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit'. 'Aus dieser durch das Thema gegebenen Möglichkeit, in der sozialen Realität handelnd zu wirken, folgt, daß die Gliederung der Außenwelt, Beruf, Stand Klasse usw. als Substrat des sozialen Handelns für den hier in Betracht kommenden Menschentypus von entscheidender Bedeutung ist.' See Georg Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans: Ein geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch über die Formen der grossen Epik* (Berlin: Paul Cassirer Verlag, 1920), 102.

of the self'.⁵⁶ Therefore it is not surprising that the genre is read and understood in terms of its moral and social function in the first place.⁵⁷ Susan Gohlman's 1990 study on the contemporary Bildungsroman points out this characteristic, on which Bildungsroman critics disagree, which generally comes down to 'the basic question of whether or not the Bildungsroman must, by definition, be informed by a set of absolute social and moral values which serve as the groundwork for the hero's development'.⁵⁸

Swales' 1979 monograph *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* investigates six German Bildungsromans in terms of its generic definition. He asserts that the longstanding problem lies, in fact, in the lack of compatibility between the genre and the actual work, in which he sees 'a localized version of the much older philosophical debate about the relationship of the particular and the general'. To understand an artwork he suggests employing the concept of the hermeneutic circle, which is in 'constant movement between generality and specificity, between national genre and given work'. In fact 'the notion of generality, of genre, is indispensable to any understanding of literary texts, and ... the lifeblood of any genre must be the interrelationship of general expectation and specific praxis, of theoretical corpus and its palpable, individuated (that is, modified) realization in an actual work'. Although a fulfilled expectation is not a criterion for entering the genre – quite the contrary – Swales makes an important point: '[e]ven the nonfulfillment of consistently intimated expectation can, paradoxically, represent a validation of the genre by means of its controlled critique'.⁵⁹ Jed Esty has also remarked on the aspect of nonfulfillment: '[t]he concept of *Bildung* has shaped literary criticism and practice for generations – a fact not altered by its nonfulfillment in any given text. Indeed, genres are almost always empty sets that shape literary history by their negation, deviation,

⁵⁶ Swales, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse*, 29.

⁵⁷ Martini, 'Bildungsroman: Term and Theory', 11.

⁵⁸ Study was originally conducted in 1970. See Susan Ashley Gohlman, *Starting Over: The Task of The Protagonist in the Contemporary Bildungsroman*, Garland Studies in Comparative Literature (New York: Garland, 1990), 11.

⁵⁹ Swales, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse*, 9–12.

variation, and mutation. Such deviations can themselves be tracked, grouped, and historicized'.⁶⁰

Given the amount of research on coming-of-age novels from other countries, one can reason that Bildungsroman studies no longer cling to the premise that it is a genuinely German genre.⁶¹ François Jost's 1983 article 'Variations of a Species: The Bildungsroman' shows the general attempt to draw distinctions between the German and British Bildungsroman narratives. He points out the different features of each and compares the prototypical novel *Wilhelm Meister* with its British counterparts, in which he cannot find patterns as significant as those of *Wilhelm Meister*. The social climate also plays a crucial role: the German genre is set in a particular historical period, and for this reason English Bildungsromans do not belong to the same genre; as he puts it, 'David Copperfield is not Wilhelm Meister. The former quenches his thirst with milk, the latter with wine'. For Jost, the term 'Bildungsroman' is not an adequate label for the English novels, since 'the meaning of the word Bildungsroman has been expanded to include many of its variants'. For this reason he suggests calling the English variants *Erziehungsromane*, 'novels of elementary education'.⁶²

Besides discussing coming-of-age novels from other countries critics have also discussed the genre in terms of historical and social change, enquiring into the relationship between the Bildungsroman as a Western genre on the one hand and modernity and modern society on the other.⁶³

⁶⁰ Esty, *Unseasonable Youth*, 18.

⁶¹ Susanne Howes' *Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen* (1930) was the first book on the British Bildungsroman. Susanne Howe, *Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen: Apprentices to Life*, Columbia University Studies in English and Comparative Literature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930). Rolf Selbmann suggests studying the German Bildungsroman in light of its European variants and including English- and French-speaking novels such as Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, George Meredith's *Harry Richmond*, and Gustave Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* into the Bildungsroman discourse. See introduction to Rolf Selbmann, *Zur Geschichte des deutschen Bildungsromans* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 1–44.

⁶² Jost, 'Variations of a Species: The Bildungsroman', 135–36, 126. The application of the term *Erziehungsroman* is disputable in this regard, since the *Erziehungsroman* is written, as mentioned in section 2.2, primarily for instructional and pedagogical purposes, whereas *Bildung* proposes the possibility of individual self-determination and self-development of an individual.

⁶³ Kontje, *The German Bildungsroman*, 111; Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 1987). The genre is no longer narrowed down to a Western context; as Esty puts it 'the novel of youth and self-formation thus carries into the post-

The Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin adopts a left-wing view with a strong emphasis on sociohistorical context. In a study written in the late 1930s he argues that with the emergence of the Bildungsroman genre the image of man changed from a static, flat, ready-made character to one who is rounded and changing; in fact the genre constructs ‘an image of *man growing in national-historical time*’ which offers insights into the historical context.⁶⁴ The Bildungsroman or ‘novel of emergence’ also shows that ‘man’s individual emergence is inseparably linked to historical emergence’, and this is why ‘he emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself’. As well as being a story of individual growth, the Bildungsroman can highlight wider historical change, especially when the protagonist is situated in a limbo between historical eras: ‘[h]e is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him. ... It is as through the very *foundations* of the world are changing, and man must change along with them’.⁶⁵ As such, the hero stands in a twofold relationship to his own individual history on the one hand and the local, national, and global contexts on the other; Esty observes that ‘the Bildungsroman (and critical reflections on it) always serves as a laboratory for reflection about the place of the individual self in larger histories’.⁶⁶

The literary scholar Tobias Boes makes a similar observation, pointing out the correlation between individual stories and social history using *Wilhelm Meister* as an example. Boes sees a new approach to narrating individual history

1945 era, in Western and non-Western contexts, both its capacity to index the desire for liberation and self-fulfillment and a more or less continuous ironization and foreclosure of that desire’. See Esty, *Unseasonable Youth*, 212.

⁶⁴ The hero’s or heroine’s experiences ‘express a general truth about a given culture at a given moment in historical time’. Tobias Boes, ‘Apprenticeship of the Novel: The Bildungsroman and the Invention of History, ca. 1770–1820’, *Comparative Literature Studies* 45, no. 3 (2008): 278 (italics in original).

⁶⁵ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Michael Holquist, and Caryl Emerson, ‘The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism’, in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 1st ed., vol. 10, University of Texas Press Slavic Series, no. 8 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 23, 25 (italics in original).

⁶⁶ Esty, *Unseasonable Youth*, 213.

that is in fact a ‘novelization of history’.⁶⁷ *Wilhelm Meister* ‘provides a literary response to the contemporary attempts to narrate history’. Consequently – and this sums up Bakhtin’s thoughts – Goethe’s Bildungsroman ‘intends to relate the individual formation of its protagonist to the historical development of the era in which he moves’. Compared to the prevalent philosophy of historicism of the time, the novel draws on other sets of sources and ‘works with concrete examples rather than with abstractions and traces how the currents of history pulse through ordinary objects’.⁶⁸ Boes takes in his later monograph, *Formative Fictions*, an aesthetic-historical approach and discusses the genre in terms of its ‘cosmopolitan remainder’ (a reference to Ernst Bloch’s asynchronicity) with which he explains the Bildungsroman’s transnational effect.⁶⁹

Franco Moretti, on the other hand, applies a rather reactionary concept to the Bildungsroman, stressing the formalistic character of the genre (with the *Bildungsroman* as a ‘symbolic form’ for modernity and youth as its sign). He sees a connection between the emergence of the European Bildungsroman as a symbolic form and the European industrial revolution, which brought about the transition from traditional to modern society.⁷⁰ Due to the hero’s increased mobility and ‘uncertain exploration of social space’, which is ascribed to inner restlessness, youth as a life-stage became ‘the most meaningful part of life’, representing a specific image of modernity.⁷¹ Mobility and interiority are, as Moretti notes, inextricably linked, since the exploration of social space generates a certain kind of interiority. Moretti considers the Bildungsroman the most contradictory of modern symbolic forms because ‘dynamism and limits, restlessness and the “sense of ending” [youth as a stage eventually coming to an

⁶⁷ Boes, ‘Apprenticeship of the Novel: The Bildungsroman and the Invention of History, ca. 1770–1820’, 271.

⁶⁸ Boes, 271, 274–75.

⁶⁹ The genre generates ‘a remainder’ that ‘resists nationalism’s aim for closure’ and as ‘none of these novels ultimately succeed in giving a definitive form to the collective experience they articulate’. Boes, *Formative Fictions*, 3.

⁷⁰ Moretti, *The Way of the World*, 5.

⁷¹ Moretti, 3–4. Considering the historical context in the nineteenth-century culture, every part of life be it spatial or temporal carries meaning. ‘Not only are there no “meaningless” events; there can now be meaning only *through* events.’ See Moretti, 6 (italics in original).

end]: built as it is on such sharp contrasts, the structure of the Bildungsroman will of necessity be *intrinsically contradictory*'. As a symbolic form it exists because of its contradictory nature; as he notes, 'this symbolic form could indeed exist, not despite but *by virtue of its contradictory nature*'. The contradiction cannot be resolved – quite the contrary: compromise and internalisation, Moretti suggests, lead to the '*interiorization of contradiction*'.⁷²

In contradistinction to the declining aristocratic values of the time, bourgeois ideology established the idea of the individual making his or her own choices in the course of maturation, based on prudently exploring different realms of life and reflecting on inner changes. Moretti borrows Yuri Lotman's two principles of the *classification* and *transformation* of the textual organization of narrative texts and applies them to the European Bildungsroman. The principle of classification emphasizes maturity, happiness, stability and order and a stable identity, whereas that of transformation values youth, freedom, change and process. The Bildungsroman alternates between those two poles, although both can exist at the same time inversely proportionally.⁷³ Moretti points out the conflict between self-determination and the demands of socialization that have defined each historical phase since the advent of modernity.

Summerfield and Downward's 2010 monograph *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman* takes an idealistic approach to perceiving the genre as a spectrum alternating between two extremes amidst which 'the Bildungsroman's center can be identified as the point at which there is a balanced give and take or mutual exchange between individual and environment'. But this does not come without tension for the protagonist, since 'becoming in transition creates tension, and frequently, a sense of contradiction, most evident in the protagonist's vacillation between the ideal and the real, between potentiality and actuality'.⁷⁴

⁷² Moretti, *The Way of the World*, 6, 9–10 (italics in original).

⁷³ Moretti, 'From the Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture', 557.

⁷⁴ Summerfield and Downward, *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, 170–71.

2.5 Minority, ethnic, postcolonial, and diasporic

Bildungsromans writers

This section elaborates on the Bildungsroman in terms of a response to crisis and instability, which are interrelated with social outsiders and marginalized people as a result of geopolitical transition, colonial migration or displacement.

Discussion of the emergence and rise of the Bildungsroman often makes mention of change and transformation. In his book *Growing up Ethnic* (2005) Martin Japtok, examining the 'ethnic Bildungsroman' authored by African American and Jewish American writers in the twentieth century, asserts that the Bildungsroman and the autobiography can be seen as responses to conditions such as crises and instability, since both genres focus on the protagonist's relations with her or his environment. As such, these literary forms can be read as works seeking a sense of order in a world of instability and transformation.⁷⁵ Within a larger framework, these narratives share a significant trait, although this may seem debatable as the Bildungsroman is often understood as 'belated echoes of an original European or Western problematic'.⁷⁶ The literary scholar Pheng Cheah makes an important point when he notes that '[t]he fact that these ideas received their first elaborate formalization in German philosophy does not make decolonizing and postcolonial nationalism derivative of a European model. They are comparable responses to a common experience of intense structural transformation – whether this takes the form of Napoleonic invasion, nineteenth-century territorial imperialism, or uneven globalization'.⁷⁷

Studies of the modern Bildungsroman address the tensions and contradictions within modernism; such novels exemplify the 'representation of subjectivity, subject formation, and the relationship of the subject to modern

⁷⁵ Martin Japtok, *Growing up Ethnic: Nationalism and the Bildungsroman in African American and Jewish American Fiction* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005), 21, 23.

⁷⁶ Esty, *Unseasonable Youth*, 208.

⁷⁷ Pheng Cheah, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Liberation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 6. Cheah discusses the extent to which postcolonial nationalist *Bildung* draws on its influence from narratives such as the Bildungsroman when it 'not only reflect or thematize the nation's *Bildung*', but also intending to be part of it. See Cheah, 240. For further discussion, see Chapter 5 of this thesis.

social formations'.⁷⁸ Recent studies recognize the cultural impact of those written by minority, ethnic and postcolonial authors.⁷⁹

Jed Esty's monograph *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development* (2012), for instance, draws attention to the 'novels of arrested development' set in post-1930s colonial contact zones. Esty argues that these modernist-era novels of development depict 'a frozen youth' due to uneven development in the imperial era: in fact these anti-developmental narratives 'block or defer the attainment of a mature social role through plots of colonial migration and displacement'. Esty also observes a 'crucial symbolic function of nationhood, which gives a finished form to modern societies in the same way that adulthood gives a finished form to modern subject'; in the Bildungsroman 'adulthood and nationhood were the twin symbolic termini for the endless and originless processes of self-transformation and social transformation'.⁸⁰

Joseph Slaughter examines a selection of texts from the perspective of human-rights law and argues that they both 'recognize and construct the individual as an incorporate process of socialization, without which individualism itself would be meaningless'.⁸¹ He argues that 'human rights and the *Bildungsroman* are mutually enabling fictions: each projects an image of the human personality that ratifies the other's vision of the ideal relations between individual and society'.⁸² In his view they are 'social technologies of demarginalization that project the generic terms not only of incorporation but also of how such incorporation might come to be recognized as the consummation of personal will and purpose – as the freest and fullest expression

⁷⁸ Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), 249.

⁷⁹ Feroza Jussawalla, 'Using the Postcolonial Bildungsroman to (Re)Define Postcoloniality', *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Servei de Publicacions, Links & Letters*, no. 4 (1997): 25–38; Boes, 'Apprenticeship of the Novel: The Bildungsroman and the Invention of History, ca. 1770–1820', 239.

⁸⁰ Esty, *Unseasonable Youth*, 2, 4, 26.

⁸¹ Joseph R. Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law*, 1st ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 19.

⁸² Joseph R. Slaughter, 'Enabling Fictions and Novel Subjects: The "Bildungsroman" and International Human Rights Law', *PMLA* 121, no. 5 (2006): 1407 (italics in original).

of the proclivities of the human personality'.⁸³ Slaughter draws attention to 'social outsiders' and 'marginalized people' whose narratives establish affirmative claims for inclusion by negotiating between their own cultural values and the values of the colonial masters.⁸⁴ He observes that 'as the canonical genre of human rights incorporation, the Bildungsroman has the dual capacity to articulate claims of inclusion in the rights regime and to criticize those norms and their inegalitarian implementation'.⁸⁵

Jeanne Gaakeer's paper 'Close Encounters of the "Third" Kind' tackles similar questions by illustrating the close link between *Humanität* and *Bildung* and drawing on Johann Gottfried Herder's notion of *Bildung*, although Gaakeer focuses on the diasporic Bildungsroman and the fact that 'the idea of socialization as the possible renunciation of a person's individuality can be elevated to the diasporic group to discuss subjects such as assimilation'. But assimilation is not a given premise in a diasporic setting, and 'when we think through the circumstance that in diasporic situations when memories of home occur in a different cultural context, there is always a risk of a distortion of views so that a hermeneutics of suspicion remains urgent for our readings of diaspora'.⁸⁶

2.6 A new notion of the self: the Bildungsroman in Asia

In the last decade or so literary historians have adopted a range of new perspectives and methods, studying twentieth-century novels from Korea,⁸⁷ Japan and China,⁸⁸ tracing the antecedents of the modern Bildungsroman in the

⁸³ Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc.*, 134.

⁸⁴ Slaughter, 27.

⁸⁵ Slaughter, 'Enabling Fictions and Novel Subjects: The "Bildungsroman" and International Human Rights Law', 1411.

⁸⁶ Jeanne Gaakeer, 'Close Encounters of the "Third" Kind', in *Diaspora, Law and Literature*, ed. Klaus Stierstorfer and Daniela Carpi (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 59–60, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110489255-005>.

⁸⁷ Mi-suk Kim, *Bildungsroman: eine Gattung der deutschen und koreanischen Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 1794, Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe I, Deutsche Sprache und Literatur (European University Studies. Series I, German Language and Literature) (Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 2001).

⁸⁸ There have been a large number of academic theses on the Chinese Bildungsroman published in Chinese in the past ten years. For further discussion see Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Chinese biographical genre (*zhuan* 傳)⁸⁹ and the Japanese 'I-Novel' *Shishōsetsu*⁹⁰ and interpreting them in light of their Western counterparts.⁹¹ Literary scholars have, for instance, compared Japanese novels with Western models in terms of how the protagonist in the Japanese *Wandlungsroman* (novel of transformation) changes throughout the plot, although his or her growth is not teleological: the hero reaches the goal through neither a rational, a linear, nor a causal developmental process.⁹² In Masao Miyoshi's view the genre tells us about the structure of society, which in the case of Japan is based on a different attitude to individuality and the self: '[t]he Japanese Bildungsroman is not so much about the self's discovery of the self as the self's disciplining itself into a production model that is hierarchically classified and blueprinted in detail by society at large'.⁹³ In the strict sense, the oppressive hierarchical structure of society nurtures the individual who, says Maya Mortimer, 'moves inward, seeks privacy and finds its lost contours in a primeval *magokoro* innocence'.⁹⁴

Dennis Washburn's 1995 article 'Manly Virtue and the Quest for Self: The Bildungsroman of Mori Ogai' focuses on the definition of selfhood and the representation of self-identity in the Japanese Bildungsroman from 1910. Analysing the Bildungsroman in the Japanese context and reading it in terms of

⁸⁹ Hua Li, *Contemporary Chinese Fiction by Su Tong and Yu Hua: Coming of Age in Troubled Times*, Sinica Leidensia (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

⁹⁰ Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner, *Selbstentblössungsrituale: Zur Theorie und Geschichte der autobiographischen Gattung "Shishōsetsu" in Der Modernen Japanischen Literatur*, 2nd ed., Iaponia Insula (München: Iudicium, 2005).

⁹¹ Ye Shaoxian 葉少嫻, 'Cong "chengzhang xiaoshuo" kan "biancheng" 從“成長小說”看“邊城” (Reading *Border Town* as a Coming-of-Age Novel)', *Bafang wenyi congkan* 八方文藝叢刊 (*Art Journal of Eight Directions*) 11 (1998): 69–77. Huang Hongjian 黃虹堅, "'Chengzhang xiaoshuo" zatan 成長小說雜談 (Random Talks on Coming-of-Age Novels)', *Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇 (*Hong Kong Literary Circles*) 25 (2004): 53–55.

⁹² According to Matthew Königsberg, Buddhism in Japan has introduced a new concept of time/timeliness which defines time as cyclical rather than linear, and which has influenced the time structure in Japanese novels. See Matthew Königsberg, "Der japanische Wandlungsroman", in *Der europäische Entwicklungsroman in Europa und Übersee: Literarische Lebensentwürfe Der Neuzeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), 224, 242.

⁹³ Masao Miyoshi, *Accomplices of Silence: The Modern Japanese Novel* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), XI.

⁹⁴ Maya Mortimer, *Meeting the Sensei: The Role of the Master in Shirakaba Writers*, Brill's Japanese Studies Library (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 223.

its Western model, Washburn expresses his concern about applying a Western term to works of Japanese literature, and points out the one-directional cultural flow of representational mode that goes from the central culture to the periphery. The cross-cultural classification inevitably comes with the introduction and implementation of the term Bildungsroman; it is certainly loaded with ideology since it seems to 'demonstrate the hegemony of Western standards', but the author can reverse the cultural flow by 'shifting the narrative to a representational mode familiar to the native culture'.⁹⁵ However, as long as the term is understood in its heuristic meaning, the genre is able to include non-German Bildungsromans. For Washburn, the Japanese coming-of-age novel adumbrates the tension between private experience and communal values on the one hand and the quest for the modern self on the other. Although the achievement of self-realization is not guaranteed, as he puts it, '[t]he theme of the Bildungsroman is one of reconciliation to the impossibility of complete self-expression as the private individual moves to conform to public values'.⁹⁶

However, in the field of Chinese literary criticism Song Mingwei, Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], and Hua Li have published English-speaking scholarly works on that topic. Song Mingwei, Huang Shuxian, and Hua Li have published works of Chinese literary criticism in English on the Bildungsroman generally focusing on the shifted meaning of selfhood and self-development in modern China and Hong Kong, respectively. The idea of *Bildung* in the sense of self-development and self-improvement is not new to Chinese tradition: it is deeply-rooted in Confucian thinking and can be traced back to the principle of (*zixing* 自省), which can be translated as self-reflection and self-examination, as in Book 4 of the *Analects*: '[w]hen you see someone who is worthy, concentrate upon becoming their equal; when you see someone who is unworthy, use this as an opportunity to look within yourself', using the ability to see and use the virtues

⁹⁵ 'The author either centers the standards of his own culture in a strong work by universalizing his or her mode of representation, or, as in most cases, renders the standards of the central culture relative by reducing them to a native context.' See Dennis Washburn, 'Manly Virtue and the Quest for Self: The Bildungsroman of Mori Ogai', *Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 1 (1995): 4–6, <https://doi.org/10.2307/133084>.

⁹⁶ Washburn, 12.

and vices of others to improve oneself'.⁹⁷ Others serve as an model for one's self-education that is attributed to the general Confucian idea of stage-by-stage self-development.

Song Mingwei's 2005 doctoral thesis 'Long Live Youth: National Rejuvenation and the Chinese Bildungsroman, 1900–1958' focuses on youth as a *leitmotif* in relation to ideas of nationhood and modernity. Since the turn of the twentieth century, youth-centred discourses have, according to Song, mirrored 'the yearnings for enlightenment, cultural reformation, political revolution, national renaissance, and modernization'. He discusses the Chinese Bildungsroman in terms of a new agent of history that perpetuates 'the national urge to rejuvenate and modernize China'.⁹⁸

Hua Li's book *Contemporary Chinese Fiction by Su Tong and Yu Hua: Coming of Age in Troubled Times* (2011) offers further discussion of the Chinese Bildungsroman, exploring the coming-of-age novels of two contemporary Chinese authors, Su Tong 蘇童 and Yu Hua 余華, drawing on Western theories. Following Song's line of reasoning Li sees the motif of youth as a dominant trope with which the genre reached its peak during the May Fourth era, although he concludes that the works that Song investigates do not fulfil the traditional educational function of the Bildungsroman.⁹⁹

As mentioned in the introduction, the literary scholar Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han] made the first attempt to analyze the fiction of the southbound literati in the context of the Bildungsroman genre in 2009.¹⁰⁰ She discusses the various protagonists' self-development¹⁰¹ and initiation into their

⁹⁷ 孔子曰：「見賢思齊焉見不賢而內自省也。」(*Kongzi yue: jian xian si qi yan jian bu xian er nei zixing ye*) The English translation is taken from: Kong and Slingerland, *Confucius Analects*, 35 (4.17).

⁹⁸ Mingwei Song, 'Long Live Youth: National Rejuvenation and the Chinese Bildungsroman, 1900–1958' (Columbia University, 2005), 2. It has also been published as a monograph: Mingwei Song, *Young China: National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900–1959*, Harvard East Asian Monographs (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015).

⁹⁹ Li, *Contemporary Chinese Fiction by Su Tong and Yu Hua*.

¹⁰⁰ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 'Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s'.

¹⁰¹ However Huang discusses the novels in terms of the Western Bildungsroman and does not mention the preconditions for this genre (i.e. the idea of self-improvement and self-development) that were set into the framework of the Confucian ethics.

new colonial environment, processes conditioned by feelings of estrangement from the colonial city and its Hong Kong 'native' residents. Arguing that both text *corpora* engage with the individual's socialization under shifting circumstances and applying selected parameters from Franco Moretti's study *The Way of the World* (1987), Huang asserts that the southbound literati's coming-of-age novels can be viewed and studied as a variant of the modern European Bildungsroman.

Building on this point, Huang determines three types of Hong Kong Bildungsroman which can be found among the corpus of Hong Kong refugee literature. She calls her first model 'memory as a guide to maturity', which deals with past nostalgic and reflective memories. In these stories the protagonist retrieves memories of living in Mainland China and reflects on them, gaining insights into his/her past life; this can also be read as a form of escapism from the present life in Hong Kong.

The second type, 'education by nature', uses the motif of the fisher girl to emphasize the rural part of Hong Kong. As in the previous model, this type depicts the protagonist's retreat from the urban space where usually the male character meets, for instance a fisher girl who helps him to explore nature, and in a way, himself. The fisher girl serves as the embodiment of purity, beauty, and nature, as played out in the novels based on the binary opposition nature versus culture. In these examples, Hong Kong is depicted as a place in which urban life in particular turns people into cold, indifferent, and distrustful human beings.

Unlike the other two models, the third, 'growing up in the city', shows the protagonist's struggle with the paradox of life in general, and in particular the materialistic way of life in Hong Kong. The city is described as an immoral and sinful place, and the city girl embodies decadence and moral decay. The 'fallen woman' is faced with the decision to either adhere to traditional moral values or cope with the materialistic way of life where she at some point commodifies herself.

Huang concludes that the Western and the Hong Kong Bildungsroman take different approaches to the concept of individual growth. In her opinion the individual in Chinese society has stronger social and family bonds than her or his Western counterpart. Growth for those individuals in a (marginalized) Chinese

society becomes more difficult when traditional norms and values are in question or seem no longer to exist in the new environment; Huang asserts that ‘initiation in Hong Kong literature can be read as a painful journey to become an individual in a society with new values yet to be formed’.¹⁰² She points out that the socialization process is particularly problematic for the female subject, as when young women go astray during the course of their maturation, traditional values are all they have to adhere to.¹⁰³

Huang’s exploratory article helps us to develop a lineage from the Chinese Bildungsroman (*chengzhang xiaoshuo* 成長小說) and trace its emergence in the first half of twentieth-century Hong Kong, as I discuss in the next chapter.

¹⁰² Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], ‘Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s’, 155.

¹⁰³ The novel *Jin Ping Mei*, published under the pen name *Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng* 蘭陵笑笑生 in late Ming dynasty (1368-1644) can be read as a negative Bildungsroman against this backdrop, in which pleasure and vices lead to the female protagonists’ moral decay.

Summary

The term and concept of the Bildungsroman originated in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Germany and was initially applied to German-speaking novels. Scholars have argued that the genre evolved and flourished in a particular German sociohistorical context: the ascent of the bourgeoisie, the ideal of the potential and perfectibility that the individual can attain through *Bildung*, together with a growing sense of a national identity. The Bildungsroman depicting the life stage of the young protagonist from childhood to adolescence and addressing his or her growth and formation is no longer entirely the German genre that existed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The coming-of-age story of the young hero or heroine has existed throughout the centuries to the present day, becoming a universal trope in world literature. With the prevalence of the genre, the twentieth century witnessed the emergence and rise of several competing Bildungsroman theories and critiques. Questions and concerns regarding the generic definition and distinctive characteristics of the Bildungsroman have been raised, in turn leading to complex debate about the binary of form and content. Coming-of-age novels have some common traits, such as the hero's journey, the significant role of society and secondary characters, and the tension between individual and society. The latter in particular has become a subject in non-Western Bildungsroman studies.

3 THE LITERARY-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CHINESE BILDUNGSROMAN

This chapter presents a literary-historical outline of the emergence and development of the Bildungsroman genre in modern and contemporary Chinese and Chinese-language literature. It traces the development of Hong Kong coming-of-age novels (*chengzhang xiaoshuo* 成長小說) by the southbound literati, rooted firstly in the introduction of Western and Japanese literature to China via translations at the turn of the twentieth century, and secondly in a shift to the first-person narrative and evocation of the figure of youth. While it is difficult if not impossible to map out the entire path from the origin of Chinese coming-of-age novels to the modern form as it existed in Hong Kong in the 1950s and beyond, it is crucial to note that the May Fourth legacy had effects on the work of the Hong Kong southbound literati, who were also profoundly influenced by the literary trends and movements launched on the Mainland in the decades prior to their emigration to Hong Kong.

3.1 The Bildungsroman in modern Chinese literature

English- and Chinese-language studies of the Chinese Bildungsroman first emerged at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and share similar approaches to subject matter, motifs, and narrative structure. Many papers discuss topics such as the genre's origin in biographies, interpreting it in terms of an initiation story, a motif of moral growth or of the rejuvenation of a nation, pointing out the trope of youth as an allegory for modernity and nationhood, analysing the narrative structure, and depicting the transformation of the individual or/and society.

For instance a 2011 study by Li Hua traces biographical traits of biographies (*zhuan* 傳) in pre-modern Chinese literature, which she believes to

be the genre closest to the Chinese Bildungsroman, although she does not mention that Chinese traditional culture includes the centuries-old idea of self-education, i.e. *Bildung*, rooted in Confucian ethics. Both biography and autobiography 'purport to be factual accounts of human lives', but the *zhuan* as the 'main vehicle of historiography' used for the compilation of dynastic histories, is just one of many sub-genres that the reader nowadays would recognize as biography, as Pei-yi Wu asserts.¹ In this regard Western literary critics too often link the Bildungsroman with biographical or autobiographical writing, although as mentioned, there are dissenting opinions on whether it parallels the author's personal biography. Karl von Morgenstern, who coined the term Bildungsroman, sees a causal connection between author and work, whereas Dilthey points out that the Bildungsroman differs from the biographical novel.² Buckley refers to Bildungsromans as 'autobiographical novels' as they contain key elements that are clearly autobiographical;³ however Li's overview of the Chinese coming-of-age novel considers that it resembles the *zhuan* form, as in the strict sense the autobiography and first-person narrative did not exist in pre-modern Chinese literature. At the end of the thirteenth century the emergence of autobiographical expression in Zen-Buddhist accounts marked a significant breakthrough to introspective expression, and beginning in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) Neo-Confucian autobiographical writing in the form of travelogues also changed the way that self-reflection was documented. Another major watershed marked the first decades of the twentieth century, and Li begins her overview with the May Fourth era and the emergence of *Chengzhang xiaoshuo* (Bildungsroman) in modern Chinese literary history, mentioning the writers Ding Ling 丁玲 (1904–1986), Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896–1945), Lu Yin 廬隱 (1898–1934), and Bing Xin 冰心 (1900–1999). She sees the rise of the genre as paralleling the youth-centred discourse of the May Fourth movement, although her main focus is on novels by

¹ Pei-yi Wu, *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 3–4. It is also to note that Chinese biography (*zhuan* 傳) was not considered literature; it was a branch of history whose didactic function and historical accuracy were given priority.

² See Chapter 1.1, footnote 2.

³ See footnote 37.

Su Tong 蘇童 and Yu Hua 宇華 which are set against the historical backdrop of the Cultural Revolution, with the heroes they are unable to find their path in a chaotic and morally degenerated society.⁴ Li asserts that these post-Mao coming-of-age novels are somehow tragic, calling them the ‘parodistic Bildungsromans’ because the protagonists do not succeed in accommodating themselves in society.⁵

A further monograph on the Chinese Bildungsroman genre, *Young China: National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900–1959* (2015), was published four years after Li Hua’s by Song Mingwei as is a revised version of his 2005 doctoral thesis.⁶ Like Li, Song discusses Bildungsromans that emerged in the first half of twentieth-century China, from late Qing to 1949, influenced by European translations and the genre’s narrative structure are intrinsically linked to ideas of nationhood and modernity. He argues that China’s vision of national rejuvenation was prompted by the rise of a youth-centred discourse during the May Fourth period. Besides functioning as a dominant trope for Chinese modernity, ‘youth’ (as the author translates *qingchun* 青春) embodies a multitude of meanings including growth, progress, newness, future, change, and rejuvenation.⁷ Song’s study strongly emphasizes the trope of youth, which he links to the emergence of the Chinese Bildungsroman since the beginning of the

⁴ Li, *Contemporary Chinese Fiction by Su Tong and Yu Hua*, 34–36; 43.

⁵ Li offers an in-depth in her analysis of Su Tong’s *North Side Story* (*Chengbei didai* 城北地帶, 1994) and Yu Hua’s *Cries in the Drizzle* (*Zai xiyu zhong huhuan* 在細雨中呼喊, 1991). This includes a stage in which the heroes are frozen between childhood and adulthood (Li, 195). Tang Xiaobing discusses two short stories by Yu Hua and Su Tong from the mid–1980s in terms of Bildungsroman, although he also includes them in the perspectives of the modernism and postmodernism discourses. See Tang Xiaobing, ‘Residual Modernism: Narratives of the Self in Contemporary Chinese Fiction’, *Modern Chinese Literature* 7, no. 1 (1993): 7–31.

⁶ Song, ‘Long Live Youth: National Rejuvenation and the Chinese Bildungsroman, 1900–1958’. Song commences his analysis with coming-of-age novels from the 1920s until the 1950s: Ye Shaojun’s *Ni Huanzhi* (1928); Mao Dun’s *The Eclipse Trilogy* (1928), *Rainbow* (1930); Ba Jin’s *Destruction* (1929), *New Life* (1933), *The Love Trilogy* (1931–1933); Lu Ling’s *Children of the Rich* (1945–1948); Lu Qiao’s *The Everlasting Song* (1959); Yang Mo’s *The Song of Youth* (1959), and Wang Meng’s *Long Live Youth* (1959).

⁷ Song, *Young China*, 15f. The formation of youth-oriented narratives during the course of the May–Fourth era, so Li Hua, is concomitant to ‘the rise of a new identity of youth as a key stage of life as well as Chinese intellectuals’ vision of rejuvenating an old Chinese civilization so to build a newly modernizing nation-state’.

last century, tracing the evolution of ‘the youth discourse together with its political, ethical, and cultural effects’, arguing that ‘youth’ has functioned as ‘the new agent of history’ to ‘perpetuate the national urge to rejuvenate, and modernize, China’.⁸ It also reflects, he says, the fundamental renewal of the old which came with a complete break from traditional patriarchal society and the prevailing Confucianism. The reform-minded intellectuals put their hopes in a generation of young and progressive people who would free themselves from institutional constraints to pursue a lifestyle that left the old behind.⁹ In his analysis Song connects Chinese youth discourse with Chinese Bildungsromans, which symbolize China’s rejuvenation in general and tell ‘an individual’s story of self-fashioning against the backdrop of social and cultural changes of modern China’ in particular. Song asserts that ‘the self-fashioning of the new youth generation motivated the beginning of a new type of literary writing which culminated in the rise of the Chinese Bildungsroman that centered on the construction of a new youth identity referring to a new historical consciousness, with both the personal development of the protagonist and the renewal of the nation combined in one plot that unfolds as a process of writing youth into history’.¹⁰ In analysis of the narrative structure the journey plays a crucial role, and at this point Song may be drawing on Bakhtin’s dynamic and changing hero who moves through national-historical time. The idea of progress underlies this narrative structure, whereas the traditional Chinese chapter-structured (or linked-chapter) novels (*zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說)¹¹, such as, for instance

⁸ Song, ‘Long Live Youth: National Rejuvenation and the Chinese Bildungsroman, 1900-1958’, 5, 2.

⁹ The writer Lu Xun 鲁迅 claims ‘I have always believed in evolutionism, holding on to the firm belief that the future will definitely be better than the past and that the young will definitely surpass their elders’. Lu Xun 鲁迅, *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 (*The Complete Works of Lu Xun*), 1st ed., vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社 (Peoples’ Literature Publishing House), 2005), 5. Lydia H. Liu has pointed out the two antagonistic categories of ‘the modern, Western, and individual (symbolized by the son), as opposed to the traditional, Chinese, and familial (represented by the older generation)’ as a crucial part and driving force behind the discourse of selfhood, nationhood, and modernity in the May Fourth period. See Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity – China, 1900–1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 82.

¹⁰ Song, *Young China*, 114.

¹¹ Linked-chapter novels have an episodic structure and the chapters are relatively loose connected. These novels, as Carlos Rojas accurately puts it, are comparable ‘... to a billiards game, in the sense

Romance of the Three Kingdoms (*Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義), *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳), *Journey to the West* (*Xiyou ji* 西遊記) and *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng* 紅樓夢), impose a rigid structure that counters the free unfolding of the hero's development and the plot.

The Chinese counterparts to the Western coming-of-age stories have the same attributes, telling the story of a youth growing up which 'is often represented as a journey, or more symbolically, the life journey of a young person who is dislocated and displaced, travelling through different historical situations or epochs in search of his own self, his inner self or a new self capable of merging with greater historical movements'.¹² The hero's inner world unavoidably correlates with the outer realm.

In the context of modern Chinese literature the journey and travelling can be considered 'a symbolic action of progression and development'. Stories with such subject matter can be read as 'a trajectory of the development of the modern self at various stages of the national journey'.¹³ These fictional or semi-autobiographical travel stories not only explore travel as an educational experience or a mode of self-expression but also reveal the social environment in which the traveller is situated. Moreover, the concept of the traveller is adapted according to the authors' actual (travel) experiences in the existing socio-political circumstances, as in Leo Ou-fan Lee's essay on the 'solitary traveller' from the late Qing to the communist era and Rong Cai's paper on the post-Mao-era traveller, with Lee commenting that Ai Wu's 艾蕪 *Accounts of a Southern Journey* (*Nanxing*

that the main narrative typically follows one character through several episodes until he or she has an encounter with a second character (like a billiard ball colliding with another), whereupon the narrative line then veers off and follows this second character through several more episodes until the second character has an encounter with a third, who then becomes the new object of narrative focus. Zhenyun Liu, 'Series Editor's Preface (by Carlos Rojas)', in *Someone to Talk To* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), viii.

¹² Song, *Young China*, 53f., 55.

¹³ Rong Cai, 'The Lonely Traveler Revisited in Yu Hua's Fiction', *Modern Chinese Literature* 10, no. 1/2 (1998): 173. The motif of the journey and wandering appears also in Zhuangzi's 莊子 'Wandering at Ease' (*xiaoyaoyou*) 逍遙遊 (Chapter 1). For a further discussion, see Lo Yuet Keung, 'Wandering and Imaginal Realms in the Analects and Zhuangzi', *Monumenta Serica* 50 (2002): 75–93.

ji 南行記) could almost be interpreted as a Chinese Bildungsroman.¹⁴

3.2 Bildungsroman studies in China

In the past few decades Chinese literary critics have readily included the genre in their scholarly works. One of the earliest discussions of the genre was generated by Feng Zhi 馮至, who has translated several works by Goethe and mentions both Bildungsroman and *Entwicklungsroman* when discussing this particular genre which, he observes, emerged from Germany in the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.

Self-cultivation (*zixing* 自省), the implications of which term I discussed earlier when mentioning the *Analects*, has according to Feng Zhi 馮至 a broad meaning:

... it is the relationship between the individual and society and [implies] how outer society hinders or fosters the individual's development. In society, [this development] evolves accidentally, inevitably, and smoothly. Sometimes it becomes entirely passive and loses its independence. Some [developments] among them are accomplished and some others are just a few broken pieces after [the individual encounters] countless unavoidable struggles, resistance, temptations, obedience, wrong tracks, and eventually reviews his or her past life.¹⁵

Xiuyang 修養, the translation of *Entwicklungsroman* and underlying the meaning of *zixing* 自省, is the process of self-cultivation in the sense that the protagonist strives to find fulfilment in her or his experience as an individual in society. Struggles or even mistakes are therefore necessary and inevitable as part of the growing process.

¹⁴ Leo Ou-fan Lee, 'The Solitary Traveler: Images of the Self in Modern Chinese Literature', in *Expressions of Self in Chinese Literature*, ed. Robert E. Hegel and Richard C. Hessney, Studies in Oriental Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 302; Cai, 'The Lonely Traveler Revisited in Yu Hua's Fiction'.

¹⁵ Feng Zhi 馮至, Yao Kekun 姚可崑, and Han Yaocheng 韓耀成, *Feng Zhi quan ji. Di shijuan, Weilian Maisite de xuexi shidai* 馮至全集 第10卷, 維廉·麥斯特的學習時代 (*Collected works of Feng Zhi*) (Shijiazhuang shi 石家莊市: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe 河北教育出版社 (Hebei Education Publishing), 1999), 4.

In the preface to Feng Zhi's (1986) book *On Goethe* (*Lun Gede* 論歌德) the term *Entwicklungsroman* describes the necessary and distinct stage-by-stage development of the hero, which is comparable to the hero in Goethe's *Faust*:

The growth of the protagonist in the novel *Wilhelm Meister* also goes through a development from stage to stage, until he eventually understands the meaning of life, which therefore contributes to the notion of *Entwicklungsroman* in German literary history. However, advancing from one phase to the next is not easy. One has to experience an arduous death of the previous phase to fulfil a happy rebirth of the next one.¹⁶

Feng Zhi gives as examples of the transformation process a snake shedding its skin and, as in legend, the rebirth of the phoenix from the ashes.¹⁷ According to Wang Xiaojue, as evidenced by Feng Zhi's translation of the German notion of *Stirb und werde* into the characters for 'dying and transforming' (*si yu bian* 死與變), he understands the growing process as metamorphosis. His choice of the character *bian* for the German imperative *werde*, says Wang, is not accurate, but he deliberately chose it to emphasize his own interpretation of *bian*. Growth and change apply to every living creature, and human beings are no exception.¹⁸ Feng's interpretation of *bian* applies to the genre, too, Wang asserts: 'Feng found in Goethe's *Entwicklungsroman* ... the best novelization of the theory of metamorphosis in the human world'. Feng's interpretation is probably guided by the idea behind Goethe's *Metamorphosenlehre* (study of metamorphosis) that all living creatures, whether plant, animal, or human, are subject to the principles and rules of growth.¹⁹

¹⁶ Feng Zhi 馮至 and Fan Dacan 范大燦, *Feng Zhi quanji. Di bajuan, Lun Gede. Feng Zhi xueshulun zhuzixue ji* 馮至全集. 第8卷, 論歌德. 馮至學術論著自學集 (Collected works of Feng Zhi) (Shijiazhuang 石家莊市: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe 河北教育出版社 (Hebei Education Publishing), 1999), 7. The English translation is taken from: Xiaojue Wang, *Modernity with a Cold War Face: Reimagining the Nation in Chinese Literature across the 1949 Divide*, Harvard East Asian Monographs (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 235.

¹⁷ See Feng Zhi 馮至 and Fan Dacan 范大燦, *Feng Zhi quanji. Di bajuan, Lun Gede. Feng Zhi xueshulun zhuzixue ji* 馮至全集. 第8卷, 論歌德. 馮至學術論著自學集 (Collected works of Feng Zhi), 7.

¹⁸ 'The character "person" reminds us that he is no different to any living creature that has to grow and to change.' See Feng Zhi 馮至 and Fan Dacan 范大燦, 82.

¹⁹ Wang, *Modernity with a Cold War Face*, 234f.

Among these different Chinese translations, the translation of 'Bildungsroman' as a 'novel of growth' (*chengzhang xiaoshuo* 成長小說) is now the most prevalent in literature studies. As mentioned, there is a huge number of studies in this field of research, particularly on the use of the term *Chengzhang xiaoshuo* since the 1990s. There are several different views on the impact of the Bildungsroman on Chinese literary studies. The last two decades have seen the publication of scholarly works, and particularly master's and PhD theses, exploring significant changes to the Bildungsroman genre's subject matter and narrative patterns. These changes, it is argued by scholarship, were chiefly triggered by cultural and socio-political changes in China in past centuries. Chinese Bildungsroman studies have some common features in terms of approach and topic: in general they address the growth and transition of the nation in a specific historical or political era and the initiation phase of a particular individual; the majority discuss the growth and redefining of the national identity symbolized as a new conception of selfhood. It is therefore hardly surprising that the novels discussed are set in transitional periods in China's history. The majority of studies take as their point of departure the May Fourth Movement or the Reform era.²⁰ Chinese literary scholars focus on a rich

²⁰ Li Mei 李玫, 'Lun sanshi niandai zuoyi dushi xiaoshuo zhong de chengzhang zhuti 論三十年代左翼都市小說中的“成長”主題 (On the Theme of “Growth” in the 1930's Left-Wing Urban Stories)', *Yancheng shifan xueyuan 鹽城師範學院學 (Yancheng Normal University)*, no. 4 (1999); Zhang Yonglu 張永祿, 'Qingchun de jiaolü - “Bashihou” xiaoshuo de chengzhang zhuti fenxi 青春的焦慮——“80 後”小說的成長主題分析 (Anxiety of the Youth. Analysis of the Theme of Growth in the Novels by Writers Born in the 1980s)' (master's thesis, Shanghai daxue 上海大學 (Shanghai University), 2006); Hu Lanqing 胡瀾卿, 'Qingchun de kunhuo: bashihou zuojia de chengzhang xiaoshuo yanjiu 青春的困惑——“80 後”作家的成長小說研究 (Confusion of the Youth: Study on the Bildungsroman by Writers Born in the 1980s)' (master's thesis, Beijing shifan daxue 北京師範大學 (Beijing Normal University), 2008); Zhou Li 周莉, 'Lun jiushi niandai yilai de chengzhang xiaoshuo 論九十年代以來的成長小說 (On the Bildungsroman from the 1990s onwards)' (master's thesis, Nanjing shifan daxue 南京師範大學 (Nanjing Normal University), 2009); Wu Yanyan 吳彥彥, 'Ershi shiji jiushi niandai yilai dushi nüxing chengzhang xiaoshuo yanjiu 20 世紀 90 年代以來都市女性成長小說研究 (A Research of Urban Female Growth Novel since the 1990s)' (master's thesis, Zhongnan daxue 中南大學 Central South University, 2010); Yu Tao 濤余, 'Linglei de chengzhang: 1990 niandai wengge ticai chengzhang xiaoshuo yanjiu 另類的成長——1990 年代文革題材成長小說研究 (Alternative Type of Growth: A Study of the Cultural Revolution in the 1990s

variety of topics, such as reading these youth-centred narratives as an indication of how China followed the path to modernism.²¹ Furthermore, these stories of initiation and growth are interpreted as allegories for the growth of a nation, especially when the rise of a social group or the implementation of a political agenda was essential in China's history:²² for instance the May Fourth period has strengthened the sense of individualism given the incorporation of autobiographical elements and by placing the protagonist at the centre of the narrative plot.²³ The narrative structure of the Bildungsroman appeals to many

Bildungsroman)' (master's thesis, Nanjing shifan daxue 南京師範大學 (Nanjing Normal University), 2011).

²¹ Jing Sun 孙婧, 'Zhongguo xiandai "chengzhang xiaoshuo" de xushixue yanjiu 中國現代“成長小說”的敘事學研究 (The Study of Narratology of the Contemporary Chinese Bildungsroman)' (master's thesis, Qingdao daxue 青島大學 (Qingdao University), 2002).

²² Jiang Zhiqing 姜智芹, 'Qingchun yu shijie de pengzhuang: xinchao chengzhang xiaoshuo lun 青春與世界的碰撞：新潮成長小說論 (A Collision between Youth and the World: On the Modern Bildungsroman)', *Guangxi shehui kexue 廣西社會科學 (Guanxi Social Sciences)*, no. 3 (2006): 2–6; Xu Xiuming 徐秀明, 'Ershi shiji Zhongguo chengzhang xiaoshuo yanjiu 20 世紀中國成長小說研究 (Study on the 20th Century Chinese Bildungsroman)' (doctoral dissertation, Shanghai daxue 上海大學 (Shanghai University), 2007); Qian Chunyun 錢春芸, 'Xingjin zhong de "xiaoshuo" Zhongguo: dangdai chengzhang xiaoshuo yanjiu 行進中的“小說”中國——當代成長小說研究 (Studies of the Undergoing Growing-up Fiction in Contemporary China)' (doctoral dissertation, 孟洲大學 (Mengzhou University), 2007); Zhang Juanying 張娟英, 'Lun Zhongguo dangdai chengzhang xiaoshuo de renwu leixing he xushi moshi 論中國當代成長小說的人物類型和敘事模式 (On Characters Types and Narrative Modes in the Chinese Contemporary Bildungsroman)' (master's thesis, Shanxi shifan daxue 陝西師範大學 Shaanxi Normal University, 2007); Mu Zhao 牟昭, 'Zhishi fenzi de changzhang xushi: geming chengzhang xiaoshuo yanjiu 知識份子的成長敘事——革命成長小說研究 (1927–1930) (The Intellectuals' Narrative of Growth: The Novel during the Revolutionary Development (1927–1930))' (master's thesis, Xinan daxue 西南大學 (Southwest University), 2011).

²³ Dan Xin 單昕, 'Lun Zhongguo dangdai chengzhang xiaoshuo zhong de fuzi guanxi moshi 論中國當代成長小說中的父子關係模式 (On the Different Patterns of Parent-Child Relationships in Contemporary Chinese Bildungsroman)' (master's thesis, Guangxi shifan daxue 廣西師範大學 (Guangxi Normal University), 2006); Zhang Juanying 張娟英, 'Lun Zhongguo dangdai chengzhang xiaoshuo de renwu leixing he xushi moshi 論中國當代成長小說的人物類型和敘事模式 (On Characters Types and Narrative Modes in the Chinese Contemporary Bildungsroman)'; Gu Guangmei 顧廣梅, 'Zhongguo xiandai chengzhang xiaoshuo yanjiu 中國現代成長小說研究 (Study on the Modern Chinese Bildungsroman)' (doctoral dissertation, 上海大學 (Shanghai University), 2009); Zhang Guolong 張國龍, 'Lun Chengzhang Xiaoshuo de Leixing 論成長小說的類型 (On the Types of Bildungsroman)', *Jining daxuebao 濟寧大學報 (Journal of Jining University)* 34, no. 2 (2013): 5–8.

Chinese literary scholars due its applicability to modern and contemporary Chinese novels. The pattern of the protagonist's stage-by-stage development and the depiction of the enlightened and transformed hero at the end are features that are somehow attractive and easy to apply for analysis, although the hero's growth and transformation are not always as smooth and fluid as expected: on the contrary, their development may be halted or come to a surprising end depending on their social circumstances.

3.3 Origins of and influences on modern Chinese literature

At the start of the twentieth century and in subsequent decades, Chinese literature underwent several fundamental and drastic changes which had a substantial impact on the intellectuals' writing in the second half of the twentieth century. In particular, as part of the larger New Culture Movement, the literary reform movement culminating in the student protest on May 4, 1919 in Beijing had a powerful effect on future generations of Chinese writers. The intellectuals of the movement introduced reforms to strengthen and 'save' Chinese society, which was considered as weak. Watershed events such as China's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese war, the abolition of the civil service exam (*keju* 科舉), the collapse of the Qing dynasty, the lasting civil wars, and China's acquiescence to the decision of the Versailles Peace Conference necessitated the need for drastic reforms. Concomitantly, the May Fourth intellectuals rejected and attacked traditional Confucian ideas while promoting and fashioning Western culture and modern literature. The following passage is from an article in *New Youth* by Luo Jialun 羅家倫, a leading figure in the May Fourth era, and illustrates the intellectuals' denigration of traditional Chinese literature and strong hopes and desires about Western literature as an example to follow:

Western literature is about human life whereas Chinese literature avoids human life as far as it can; Western literature arouses human sympathy whereas Chinese literature is so self-absorbed; Western literature is truth-seeking whereas Chinese literature is full of falsehood; Western literature is natural and about the common people, whereas Chinese literature is aristocratic, affected; Western literature nurtures the development of

individuality, whereas Chinese literature favours breathing through the noses of the ancestors.²⁴

While it is difficult to disentangle every single idea and strand of thought that was introduced in this very receptive era, a few important points were crucial in the development of modern Chinese literature in the twentieth century. The paragraph below discusses the diverse and chiefly Western influences introduced into China via various translations at the turn of the century. The Bildungsroman was one of these. The next section focuses on the May Fourth writers' generation and their perception of a new selfhood centring on the individualism discourse, which in turn facilitated the discourse on humans and humanism at the time. The last part shows how, following the May Fourth era, modern Chinese literature shifted to the left accompanied by China's revolutionary literature movement.

3.3.1 *Translations in China*

The generation that experienced the May Fourth Movement absorbed a great many Western ideas from translated Western works which represented, as Qi points out, a 'massive transfusion of fresh, foreign blood into the body politic of China'.²⁵ These were immensely popular, based on the number of translations made. Leo Ou-fan Lee notes that 'tremendous energies were unleashed to introduce Western literature, which was received generally with tremendous enthusiasm'.²⁶ Translations of foreign literature played a crucial role in the formation of modern Chinese literature;²⁷ print media in general was a powerful

²⁴ Xie Tianzhen 謝天振, *Zhongxi fanyi jianshi 中西翻譯簡史 (A Brief History of Translation in China and the West)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language and Education Press, 2009), 72. Quoted in Shouhua Qi, *Western Literature in China and the Translation of a Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 51.

²⁵ Qi, *Western Literature in China and the Translation of a Nation*, 2012, 78.

²⁶ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*, Harvard East Asian Series (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973), 276.

²⁷ Doleželová-Velingerová argues from a different standpoint that foreign influences introduced via translations during the late Qing period were not as profound as one would have assumed. However, opinions differ regarding to what extent Western translations had an impact on Chinese modern

tool and a easily accessible platform for May Fourth writers to voice their new ideas to a vast audience. According to Lee, the mushrooming of these print outlets reached its climax during the May Fourth period, with 840–2,000 different newspapers and journals in circulation. These and the intellectual journals ‘formed the institutional base for this new power elite’.²⁸ Translations published in literary journals greatly facilitated the promotion and dissemination of Western literature, as enthusiasm for foreign literature was widespread. The turn of the century and then China’s humiliating defeat in the First Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895) saw a rise in translated works, particularly from Japan. Chinese students were sent to Japan to learn from its reforms and modernization since the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Many leading figures in modern Chinese literature such as Lu Xun 魯迅, Zhou Zuoren 周作人, Yu Dafu 郁達夫, and Guo Moruo 郭沫若 spent time in Japan absorbing Japanese and Western ideas and returned with a strong socio-political mission. Liang Qichao, for instance was greatly influenced by Meiji Japan’s literary trends and called for re-evaluation of the Chinese novel to bring about a ‘spiritual transformation through literature’.²⁹ Another literary trend from Japan was the I-novel, a product of European naturalism which had adopted a new and unique form and meaning in Japan. The I-novel illustrates ‘the principle of inward reflection and the subjective expression of human “nature” in isolation from objective realities’. Many translations of Japanese naturalistic theories circulated in China in late 1910, published by members of the Chinese Literary Association (*Wenxue yanjiuhui* 文學研究會) and the Creation Society

literature. According to Doleželová-Velingerová foreign influences were limited as selections were made which works were to be translated by Chinese writers adapting to the readers’ demand.

²⁸ Leo Ou-fan Lee, ‘Incomplete Modernity: Rethinking the May Fourth Intellectual Project’, in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China’s May Fourth Project*, ed. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, Harvard East Asian Monographs (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 52. Lee quoted these circulation figures from a paper by Zhang Hao presented at Academia Sinica, Taipei, July 12. Zhang Hao 張灝, *Zhuanxing shidai (1895–1920) zai Zhongguo jinxiandai sixiangshi yu wenhuashi de zhongyao xing 轉型時代 (1895–1920) 在中國進現代思想史與文化史的重要性 (The importance of the transitional period in modern Chinese intellectual and cultural history)*

²⁹ Ching-mao Cheng, ‘The Impact of Japanese Literary Trends on Modern Chinese Writers’, in *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, ed. Merle Goldman, Harvard East Asian Series (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 64f. Liang Qichao was particularly interested in political fiction. Cheng, 66.

(*Chuangzhaoshe* 創造社). The latter was probably influenced by the Japanese genre, whose impact on the Literary Association was minimal.³⁰

The literary works most frequently translated into Chinese were from Germany, France, England, America, Japan, and the Soviet Union. The latter started to dominate the literary scene in the late 1920s, and its influence lasted until the mid-1950s and the beginning of the Hundred Flowers Campaign (1956–1957).³¹ The major literary influences were romanticism, realism, social realism, and symbolism originating from Russian literature, although not all genres were equally suited to modern Chinese literature. These trends attracted social criticism from writers such as Mao Dun 茅盾, Guo Moruo 郭沫若, and Lao She 老舍, including works explicitly voiced by Wen Yiduo 聞一多 and Xu Zhimo 徐志摩.³² In terms of literary reception, realism and naturalism were, as Douwe W. Fokkema observes, with the exception of Mao Dun 茅盾, less approachable than symbolism.³³

Nonetheless, realism and romanticism were two major trends at that time. According to Leo Ou-fan Lee, the legacy of nineteenth-century European romanticism in particular had a tremendous impact on the May Fourth generation, and with its ‘iconoclastic and emancipational temper’ the intellectuals fully submerged themselves in a world of emotional ethos and sentiment.³⁴ The enthusiasm for this genre may have been caused, Lee explains, by the fact that the May Fourth writers were greatly influenced by Western

³⁰ Beside the autobiographical character, the I-novel features ‘a Rousseauesque morality of unrestrained self-revelation, intensive lyricism, and occasional self-pity, and by a sentimental search for the so-called *kindai-jiga* (modern selfhood). See Cheng, ‘The Impact of Japanese Literary Trends on Modern Chinese Writers’, 78–80.

³¹ McDougall’s essay offers an overview of the dominant left-wing literary journals and their translation agenda in the 1930s. Bonnie S. McDougall, ‘The Impact of Western Literary Trends’, in *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, ed. Merle Goldman, Harvard East Asian Series (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 51f.

³² Guo Moruo’s 郭沫若 autobiography *Childhood* (*Shoanian shidai* 少年時代) from 1947 is such an example.

³³ Douwe W. Fokkema, ‘Lun Xun: The Impact of Russian Literature’, in *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, ed. Merle Goldman, Harvard East Asian Series (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 89–101.

³⁴ Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*, 291.

literary theories, most significantly the concept of literary evolutionism, which facilitated their attempt to fit modern Chinese literature into evolutionary categories. The development of European literature was perceived as stage-by-stage forward progress, whereas Chinese literature had halted at a point between classicism and romanticism, with works of neoromanticism being introduced and strongly promoted in the May Fourth era.³⁵ Shi Shu-mei, building on Lee's point, argues that Chinese writers and critics considered neoromanticism the most advanced and modern development in literature which 'served as a discourse with which to criticize Chinese national character, to ascribe gender and age value to the Chinese self, and to serve as the destination of literary teleology'.³⁶ Lee mentions the forward perception of time and history in terms of the emergence of 'modernity' in China, influenced by the Western concept of unilinear time, and the concept of evolution proposed by Darwinism.³⁷ In the 1920s and 1930s modernity was rather an unrealized idea, says Lee, introduced 'in the guise of the modernity of *other* societies' such those of Europe, America, and Japan. Interestingly, Chinese intellectuals felt a pressing need to pursue the ideas and values of the 'modern world' as a way to arrest imperialism, since the modernity of the societies mentioned was introduced in conjunction with imperialism.³⁸ Lee also draws an analogy between the European and Chinese

³⁵ Lee, 276–77. Lee points out that the reception of realism and romanticism was different in China than in Europe, which makes the term neoromanticism misleading in terms of its usage and connotations. For further discussion on the early debate about Western literary theories in China and the history of some influential magazines and groups, see Bonnie S. McDougall, *The Introduction of Western Literary Theories into Modern China: 1919–1925*, East Asian Cultural Studies Series (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1977), 1–53.

³⁶ Shi Shumei [Shih Shu-mei], *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937*, Berkeley Series in Interdisciplinary Studies of China (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 56–57.

³⁷ Leo Ou-fan Lee, 'In Search of Modernity: Some Reflections on a New Mode of Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Chinese History and Literature', in *Ideas across Cultures: Essays on Chinese Thought in Honor of Benjamin I. Schwartz*, ed. Paul Andrew Cohen and Merle Goldman, Harvard East Asian Series (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990), 111–12, 122. Shi Shumei points out that time became the final difference between China and the West and that 'the linear, developmental conception of history and culture was the most salient characteristic of the particular May Fourth understanding of modernity'. See Shi, *The Lure of the Modern*, 53–54.

³⁸ Lee, 'In Search of Modernity: Some Reflections on a New Mode of Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Chinese History and Literature', 127. Lee mentions at this point the double meaning of the

literary movement: '[b]oth the Romantic Movement in nineteenth century Europe ... and the Literary Revolution in [the] twentieth century represented a reaction against the classic tradition of order, reason, schematization, ritualization, and structuring of life. Both ushered in a new emphasis on sincerity, spontaneity, passion, imagination, and the release of individual energies – in short, the primacy of subjective human sentiments and energies'.³⁹ He argues that these writers may have been predisposed to romantic tendencies due to the sentimental tradition embedded in classical Chinese literature.

In general Western literature was seen as a precious tool for strengthening and saving the nation. According to Shouhua Qi it was chiefly political novels that needed to be prioritized for translation, and Liang Qichao especially strongly advocated this genre. The first work of fiction to be translated was Alexandre Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélias* (1899), followed by other classics from England, Spain and Russia, including Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*, Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI*, and *Julius Caesar*, Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Illyich*.⁴⁰ During the 1920s, in the aftermath of the May Fourth Movement, there was increasing interest in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novels. The earliest translation of Goethe's work was by Ma Junwu 馬君武 (1881–1948), who in the first decade of the twentieth century translated fragments of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and *Mignon*, a song from *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*.⁴¹ The poet and historian Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978) completed the translation of *Werther* in 1922. Ten years later segments from *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* appeared in

Western modernity, a division into historical and aesthetic modernity in the first half of the nineteenth century, whereas Chinese writers did not discern between the two. Lee, 124–25. Sebastian Veg, building on Lee's point, discusses the 'dichotomy between Western "high modernism" critical of socioeconomic modernity and the purported embrace of modernization by Chinese writers' in his essay. Sebastian Veg, 'Democratic Modernism: Rethinking the Politics of Early Twentieth-Century Fiction in China and Europe', *Boundary 2* 38, no. 3 (1 January 2011): 27–65, <https://doi.org/10.1215/01903659-1430818>.

³⁹ Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*, 292.

⁴⁰ Qi, *Western Literature in China and the Translation of a Nation*, 2012, 38–42.

⁴¹ Terry Siu-han Yip, 'Texts and Contexts: Goethe's Work in Chinese Translation Prior to 1985', *Asian and African Studies* 6, no. 2 (1997): 200.

Shanghai (at the publishing house *Fuxing shuju* 復興書局),⁴² and by 1943 it had been translated in full by Feng Zhi 馮至 (1905–1993), a translator and poet who had gained a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Heidelberg in the 1930s.⁴³ In the preface to the Chinese version of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (*Weilian Masite de xuexi shidai* 維廉麥斯特的學習時代), which was written in 1943 and revised in 1984, Feng commends the novel as an example of both the German Bildungsroman and the *Entwicklungsroman*, which he translates as 'novel of cultivation' (*Xiuyang xiaoshuo* 修養小說) and 'novel of development' (*Fazhan xiaoshuo* 發展小說) respectively.⁴⁴ In an article published in 1982 Feng introduced a third term, 'novel of education' (*jiaoyu xiaoshuo* 教育小說), as a translation of Bildungsroman.⁴⁵ Of all these translations, 'novel of growth' (*chengzhang xiaoshuo* 成長小說) can be considered to most accurately define its Chinese meaning and has been most commonly used in Chinese literary criticism so far. However it was not until the 1990s, as Li points out, that this genre was included in the discourse of Chinese literary studies.⁴⁶

⁴² See Shouhua Qi, *Western Literature in China and the Translation of a Nation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 211.

⁴³ Qi, *Western Literature in China and the Translation of a Nation*, 2012, 129.

⁴⁴ It is not clear whether Feng Zhi differentiates between *Bildungsroman* and *Entwicklungsroman*. He translates *Bildungsroman* as *Xiuyang xiaoshuo* 修養小說, although he applies the same term to the *Entwicklungsroman*. The preface of Feng's translation notes that the novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* was translated in the 1940s during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Feng Zhi 馮至, Yao Kekun 姚可崑, and Han Yaocheng 韓耀成, *Feng Zhi quanji. Di shijuan, Weilian Masite de xuexi shidai* 馮至全集 第10卷, 維廉·麥斯特的學習時代 (*Collected works of Feng Zhi*), n.p.

⁴⁵ According to Song, the term *Bildungsroman* was firstly introduced in the May Fourth period, although he does not specifically mention by whom. Song, *Young China*, 53.

⁴⁶ Li, *Contemporary Chinese Fiction by Su Tong and Yu Hua*, 15. There has been a rise in the number of scholarly theses published in Chinese since the 1990s in which literary scholars adopted Western literary-philosophical discourse on the Bildungsroman in their work, see Wang Yan 王炎, *Xiaoshuo de shijianxing yu xiandaixing: Ouzhou chengzhang jiaoyu xiaoshuo xushi de shijianxing yanjiu* 小說的時間性與現代性: 歐洲成長教育小說敘事的時間性研究 (*The temporality and modernity in novels: a study on temporality in European education and coming-age novels and narratives*) (Beijing 北京: Waiyu jiaoxue yu yanjiu chubanshe 外語教學與研究出版社 (Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press), 2007).

3.3.2 *Translations in Hong Kong*

The year 1949 was a turning point for translation activities in Hong Kong, and with that, says Martha P. Y. Cheung, ‘a new world order emerged’. Hong Kong became ‘a site for a fierce ideological battle between communism and anti-communism’.⁴⁷ Against the backdrop of the Communist victory on the Mainland in 1949 and immediately following the outbreak of the Korean War, the Western Bloc feared that communism would spread to the British colony, and to prevent its rise in Asia the US government provided substantial funding for translations of fictional and non-fictional works into Chinese. For instance the publication house World Today Press (*Jinri shijie chubanshe* 今日世界出版社) launched a systematic and vigorous campaign to translate literary works, and lists over three hundred works translated into Chinese between the 1950s and the 1980s. Apart from activities facilitated by the US subsidy, a major translation movement emerged in Hong Kong in 1956, also intending to use translations to combat communism. Ma Lang 馬朗 [Ronald Mar], an active translator and editor of several literary journals and newspapers on the Mainland launched the *Literary Current* (*Wenyi xinchao* 文藝新潮) (1956–1959) in Hong Kong as a forum for the promotion of (Western) modernist literature with the following agenda:

[T]o provide a literary repertoire that would stand in sharp contrast to that canonized by the Chinese Communist Party, to advocate a literary poetics distinctly different from that of the Socialist Realism propounded by the CCP [Chinese Communist Party], and to counter the ideological education of the masses by the spirit of socialism with technologies of the self informed by the spirit of modernism.⁴⁸

This promotion and dissemination of translations of modernist literature and the Chinese reception of Western discourse on modernity would have the effect of

⁴⁷ Martha P. Y. Cheung, ‘Translation Activities in Hong Kong – 1842 to 1997’, in *Übersetzung: ein internationales Handbuch zur Übersetzungsforschung (Translation: An International Encyclopedia of Translation Studies)* ed. Harald Kittel, vol. 1, Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 2197. For further discussion on the ‘greenback culture’ subsidized by American financial backing see section 3.5.

⁴⁸ Cheung, 2198.

challenging the individual's existing and prescribed roles by questioning the societal status quo which, in a wider context, had the potential to facilitate the *Bildung* of an alternative identity not subject to CCP ideology.⁴⁹

Ma Lang 馬朗 [Ronald Mar] was very aware of the situation in China when the CCP introduced its nationwide translation policy as part of an education programme promoting Socialist Realism. Chiefly Russian works were translated into Chinese and non-Russian works were selected according to the literary standards of the Soviet Union. Any literary translations from Western languages were from nineteenth-century writers, allowing contemporary (modernist) Western work no opportunity to enter China; Wolfgang Bauer asserts that 'modern or contemporary Western writers [were] very much neglected' at the time.⁵⁰ In Hong Kong, Ma Lang 馬朗 [Ronald Mar] was able to counter the prevailing translation trend on the Mainland with his *Literary Current*, which was exclusively devoted to translations and reviews of Western modernist literature. As the journal's editor he was free to select works for translation, favouring particular literary trends such as French existentialism and American poetry. *Literary Current* influenced generations of literary journals, and the translation of some selected works, for instance, Sartre's *Erostratus*, constituted, as Yau Wai Ping states, 'an alternative to the CCP's version of the self by reproducing the tension between the individual and society'.⁵¹

⁴⁹ See for instance the discussion on the concept of translation as the agent of an identity and nation-building process. Dilek Dizdar and Andreas Gipper, 'Einleitung: Übersetzung als Konstruktionselement nationaler Identitäten (Introduction: Translations as Structure Element of National Identities)', in *Nationenbildung und Übersetzung (Nation-Building and Translation)*, ed. Dilek Dizdar, Andreas Gipper, and Michael Schreiber, *Ost-West-Express: Kultur und Übersetzung* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2015), 7–16; Gaudi Kristmannsson, 'Zur Nation durch Translation (To a Nation through Translation)', in *Nationenbildung und Übersetzung (Nation-Building and Translation)*, 17–26.

⁵⁰ Wolfgang Bauer, *Western Literature and Translation Work in Communist China* (Frankfurt/Main, Berlin: A. Metzner, 1964), 17; 24.

⁵¹ Wai Ping Yau, 'Literary Translations in Hong Kong in the 1950s: Ma Lang's Translation *Erostratus* in *Literary Current Monthly Magazine*', in *Translation in Hong Kong: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Sin-wai Chan (Chinese University Press, 2001), 35. For an in-depth discussion of *Literary Current*, see Section 3.5.1.

3.3.3 *Literary context of the May Fourth Movement: modern selfhood and individualism*

Scholars in general agree that the 1919 May Fourth student protest was the both result and the climax and of a formal and moral revolt that had lasted for almost two decades.⁵² May Fourth is as characterised by three interrelated components: intellectual enlightenment, political protest, and literary revolution.⁵³ Western literary trends played a significant role in the development of modern Chinese literature from the late Qing dynasty onwards. Besides focusing on Western thinking and values, the May Fourth intellectuals initiated a literary reform of their own, advocating realism and a new style of writing known as *baihua* 白話 or *baihua wen* 白話文 (writing in vernacular Chinese).⁵⁴ Chen Jianhua points out that part of the debate of the literary revolution was about the ‘new literature’, while the debate over ‘old literature’ was primarily carried out in the field of language advocating the use of classical (*wenyan* 文言) and vernacular (*baihua* 白話),⁵⁵ although, according to Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, vernacular language and fiction are the two principal characteristics of early modern Chinese literature.⁵⁶

During the late Qing period there was a change in the hierarchy of literary genres: in particular, fiction, which had not yet risen to the status of ‘literature’,

⁵² See for instance Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

⁵³ Pingyuan Chen and Michel Hockx, *Touches of History: An Entry into ‘May Fourth’ China*, Brill’s Humanities in China Library (Leiden: Brill, 2011), VII.

⁵⁴ Tse-tsung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, 2nd ed., Harvard East Asian Studies (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 269–88. Chen discusses *New Youth* magazine’s devotion to the topic of *baihua* whose debates goes deeper than mere a ‘literary form’: ‘The entry point was literary form but the true target was a revolution in thought and culture’. See Chen and Hockx, *Touches of History*, 98, 95–99.

⁵⁵ Jianhua Chen, ‘Canon Formation: Literary Debates in Republican China 1910–1949’, in *Beyond the May Fourth Paradigm: In Search of Chinese Modernity*, ed. Kai-wing Chow and Tze-Ki Hon (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 51–67. Chen’s essay examines the transition from classical (*wenyan* 文言) to vernacular (*baihua* 白話) by mapping out the social and political roles of the writers of the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School genre (*Yuanyang hudie pai* 鴛鴦蝴蝶派) in the 1920s.

⁵⁶ Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, ‘The Origins of Modern Chinese Literature’, in *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, Harvard East Asian Series (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 17.

was prioritized over poetry and the essay. The novel enjoyed a revitalization in the late Qing period in response to the literary and language crisis of the time: 'the novel [became] a sophisticated literary medium in which a developed form of vernacular language could encompass many aspects of the classical language'.⁵⁷ One of the most important spokesmen for this genre in the first decades of the twentieth century was Liang Qichao 梁啟超, who published an article titled 'On the Relationship between Fiction and the Rule of the Masses' (1902) (*Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi de guanxi* 論小說與群治的關係) in which he proclaimed the novel's potentiality and power to transform the people and the nation. Liang saw the political novel as an effective way to enlighten people, which could therefore be used for political education. He called for a 'revolution of the novel' (*Xiaoshuojie geming* 小說界革命), coining the term 'new novel' (*Xin xiaoshuo* 新小說). In line with the promotion of the novel as an efficient modern tool, the literary scholar David Der-wei Wang 王德威 stresses the modernity in late Qing fiction, singling out four of its genres and arguing that they were 'suppressed when Chinese literature formally entered its modern stage, in the wake of the May Fourth movement'.⁵⁸ He questions the emergence of the 'single modern(ist) doctrine received from established Western authorities' and implemented by the May Fourth writers, stating that the late Qing era embodied the most active stage in the rise of modern Chinese literature.⁵⁹

There had been a significant structural change to the novel almost two centuries earlier. According to Martin W. Huang the relationship between novelists and their work, and the notion of authorship in particular, shifted during the seventeenth century. Novels from that period also displayed autobiographical tendencies, since writers were given the opportunity to express and narrate their inner life. This shift, marked by 'the changing nature of the authorship – from 'collective/public' to 'individual/private' – paralleled the changing thematic concerns of the novel'. Prior to this authorship had commonly

⁵⁷ Doleželová-Velingerová, 25f., 30.

⁵⁸ David Der-Wei Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849-1911* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 52.

⁵⁹ Wang, 16–17 (brackets in original).

been anonymous, as the writing of a novel was a multiple-person project for which no particular writer could usually claim credit. It was not considered appropriate for a member of the literati to write novels. The trend towards single authorship provided novelists with the possibility of expressing themselves personally, and even of drawing from their own life experience. Taking this into account, Huang mentions Li Lüyuan's 李綠園 (1707-90) eighteenth-century novel *Warning Light at the Crossroads* (*Qilu deng* 歧路燈) as the first Chinese Bildungsroman.⁶⁰ During the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth century the literati's self-identity underwent a significant change due to the diversity of professional and social roles that they were offered, which fragmentation intensified the confusion and ambiguity about their status in society.⁶¹

The literati's status and role came under scrutiny again just over a century later. During the May Fourth era tension grew due to an identity crisis among the literati, with intellectuals questioning the function of literature and the legitimacy of authorship. Contrary to the common belief that the May Fourth movement was a homogenous drive composed of writers with a united front and a clear vision of a literary revolution, Wendy Larson's study, *Literary Authority and the Modern Chinese Writer* (1991), presents a complex and nuanced picture that reveals deep uncertainty among these writers and their pursuit of a new literary modernity. The changing notion of the role of the intellectual resulted in a new construction of the self and re-evaluation of their status as literati (*wenren* 文人) during this period.⁶² They were very perceptive about their role and responsibility in society, in particular as leaders of a social movement, and felt obliged to attest to their own and their collective identity. For instance noticing the decline in social responsibility among the intellectuals, the writer and southbound literati Cao Juren 曹聚仁 (1900–1971), discussed in later chapters, adopted a critical attitude

⁶⁰ Martin W. Huang, *Literati and Self-Re/Presentation: Autobiographical Sensibility in the Eighteenth-Century Chinese Novel* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 17–23.

⁶¹ Huang, 36.

⁶² Wendy Larson, *Literary Authority and the Modern Chinese Writer: Ambivalence and Autobiography* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 32–60. According to Larson, the abolition of the civil service exam system in 1905 severely disrupted intellectuals' sense of identity. See Larson, 34.

towards the May Fourth students, accusing them of 'fickleness'. As Weipin Tsai concludes, 'the subject of consciousness obsessed intellectuals; they relentlessly analysed their personal existence to discover what kind of consciousness they possessed'.⁶³

In the first decades of the twentieth century the May Fourth intellectuals introduced a new discourse on the self to modern Chinese literature. The concept of the autonomous self in fictional narratives had not existed in pre-modern China. Kirk A. Denton's book *The Problematic of Self in Modern Chinese Literature: Hu Feng and Lu Ling* (1998) tackles crucial problems that emerged in the late Qing and May Fourth eras centring on the formation of modern Chinese subjectivity, which oscillated between the duality of individualism and collectivism on the one hand, and found itself caught between tradition and modernity on the other. Within this framework Denton defines his understanding of Chinese modernity as 'the rhetoric of newness, progress, enlightenment, revolution, and self received from Western sources but remoulded by intellectuals in response to a specific historical context of imperialism and domestic social decay'.⁶⁴ Denton argues that the new selfhood marked the shift from tradition to modernity in China: 'Chinese modernity and its literature, with their attention to the individual and the representation of mind, clearly mark a break from tradition'. This can be seen as the consequence of the release from the Confucian tradition: '[t]he modern obsession with self was no less than an attempt to break out of the predicament of the neo-Confucian self trapped by the cosmological myth and ethics of *li* [rite]'.⁶⁵ In Confucian tradition the self stands in relation to the divine (*tian* 天), and both the internal self and the external world form a holistic union that stands in contradiction to the Western understanding of subjectivity, as Denton observes: '[t]he Chinese philosophical and cosmological system thus could not

⁶³ Weipin Tsai, "'Ziyoutan" Revisited: The Literature Supplement and Its Writers', in *Reading Shenbao: Nationalism, Consumerism and Individuality in China 1919-37* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 133–36.

⁶⁴ Kirk A. Denton, *The Problematic of Self in Modern Chinese Literature: Hu Feng and Lu Ling* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 7. Leo Ou-fan Lee also discusses modernity in China, though in terms of a vague concept that the intellectuals tried to frame in a Chinese context. See footnote 84.

⁶⁵ Denton, 42.

generate a view of self as fully autonomous from other selves or from socio-political institutions'. This does not mean that in the late Qing and May Fourth periods any links to tradition were cut: if anything, 'in both literary theory and practice, modern writers were unconsciously working out, with new discursive tools borrowed from the West, a predicament about self's relationship to the world and its role in social transformation that had ties to tradition'.⁶⁶

The quest for modernity was coupled with the invention of a new individual and a vision of the self liberated from the shackles and chains of tradition and ritual which had to free itself from the burden of Confucian duties. According to Rong Cai, the May Fourth intellectuals '[identified] Confucianism as the primary target, the critique of tradition focused on the Confucian self in personal relations, the pivot of the Confucian vision of the world'. In the sense that the self is grounded in its relatedness to social relationships and responsibilities, this also meant, to the intellectuals, that the self always finds itself in a state of dependency on and submission to authority.⁶⁷ Their total rejection of tradition changed the approach of literature and the way it was practiced, as Feng Liping notes: '[t]he May Fourth radical rejection of Confucian morality constituted the sociomoral content of the New Literature'.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, the May Fourth generation's emphasis was on an intellectual enlightenment, to be achieved first of all through ideological transformation. Western concepts and catchwords such as 'individualism' (*geren zhuyi* 個人主義), 'freedom' (*ziyou* 自由), and 'democracy' (*minzhu zhuyi* 民主主義), and especially the Chinese neologisms 'individual' (*geren* 個人) and 'individualism', facilitated the

⁶⁶ Denton, 37f., 40–41.

⁶⁷ Rong Cai, *The Subject in Crisis in Contemporary Chinese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 15.

⁶⁸ Liping Feng, 'Democracy and Elitism: The May Fourth Ideal of Literature', *Modern China* 22, no. 2 (1996): 172. Feng argues that it was the 'rejection of the restrictions of traditional literary form in favor of the vernacular, in spontaneity, and freedom, and rejection of the Confucian moral code in favor of a "humanism" or a recognition of "human nature" [that] contributed to the image of May Fourth intellectuals as the voice of the people'. Despite advocating for freedom and spontaneity, particularly in poetry, the intellectuals imposed a set of rules with which they drew a distinction between low and high literature, although the latter being less approachable for readers due their unfamiliarity with Western models. See Feng, 174, 183.

conception of the modern individual and were speedily implemented in the May Fourth rhetoric: 'the tenor of the widely adopted neologisms of *individual* and *individualism* is the celebration of the once neglected and suppressed self'.⁶⁹ In this context, Rong Cai asserts, from the time of its adoption the concept of individualism was 'inextricably linked with the idea of nationhood and modernity' in China. The May Fourth intellectual had, therefore, a teleological purpose.⁷⁰ Given the sociohistorical context, they may also have been imbued with a sense of the teleology of individuality.

In her essay 'The Discourse of Individualism' Lydia Liu traces the origins and different connotations of the words 'self' and 'individualism' in early modern China, although the meaning of the latter, she states, was not fixed at the time of its introduction.⁷¹ The concepts of selfhood and nationhood entered China concomitantly at the turn of the twentieth century, and have often been discussed as opposing ideas. Liu argues that 'individualism did not always constitute itself as the counterdiscourse of nationalism',⁷² but adopted a liberatory role inasmuch as it opened up a battle zone for the May Fourth intellectuals to advocate 'modernity' and reject 'traditionalism'. Moreover, she asserts, 'it contributed to the process of inventing *geren* [individual] for the goals of liberation and national revolution'. In this sense, despite 'its apparent clash with the nation-state, the discourse of individualism found itself complicit with nationalism'.⁷³ In spite of the great emphasis on selfhood, it did not necessarily happen at the expense of society or the nation. The narratives of the May Fourth generation reflected these profound changes generated by the new perception of the self. It was a time of the 'awakening of the individual' and its generation developed an intense awareness of the individual's role in society.⁷⁴ With the introduction, via translation, of Western fiction and particularly of new narrative modes and

⁶⁹ Cai, *The Subject in Crisis in Contemporary Chinese Literature*, 15–16.

⁷⁰ Cai, 16–17.

⁷¹ Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 82–82.

⁷² Liu, 86.

⁷³ Liu, 91.

⁷⁴ Lydia H. Liu, 'Translingual Practice: The Discourse of Individualism between China and the West', in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, ed. Tani E. Barlow (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 43.

structures, the May Fourth writers turned their focus to what Liu calls the 'modern autobiographical subject', which 'takes itself seriously, asserts its autonomy against traditional society, and possesses an interiority representable in narrative – [and] made its entry into Chinese literature exactly at the time the individual and tradition were being constructed as polar opposites'.⁷⁵ Liu argues that Chinese writers experimented with narrative modes borrowed from European fiction at the same time, producing huge quantities of first-person fiction and autobiography in which 'the protagonist no longer serves as a mere element within the nexus of patriarchal kinships and/or in a transcendental, divine scheme as in most pre-modern Chinese fiction'.⁷⁶

There is a less obvious distinction between first- and third-person narrator in the Chinese than in Western and narrative modes. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová points out three different narrative modes found in late Qing novels, one of which is the first-person (subjective) personal mode. Unlike in Western narratives, most Chinese fiction of this time was not only about the individual itself but also the novelist's personal observations and reflections about society. As Doleželová-Velingerová puts it: '[i]n many modern Chinese short stories, the first-person narrator's experience is combined with the search for his own identity in a world wider than his private universe. The basic question 'Who am I?', obsessive in Western fiction, is in China overshadowed by the 'Who am I in my society?''⁷⁷

Lydia Liu asserts that the protagonist in modern fiction dominates the text as the locus of meaning and is perceived as possessing psychological and moral 'truth'.⁷⁸ She points out that during this period there was a shift towards intense

⁷⁵ Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 95. Liu borrowed from Gerard Genette's categories of homodiegetic and autodiegetic narratives.

⁷⁶ Liu, 102.

⁷⁷ Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, 'Narrative Modes in Late Qing Novels', in *The Chinese Novel at the Turn of the Century*, ed. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, Modern East Asian Studies (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 57–58; 71–72.

⁷⁸ Liu, 'Translingual Practice: The Discourse of Individualism between China and the West', 102. C. T. Hsia praises the "Dream of the Red Chamber" as 'a supreme work of psychological realism', although it is, as Denton observes, in spite of the novel's psychological characteristics: 'In no work of the Chinese narrative tradition, even in this most psychological of its novels, does figural

awareness of a new selfhood in debates on modern Chinese narratives.⁷⁹ This marked the beginning of the formation of what can be categorised as ‘self-referential’ fiction, a characteristic of modernism that ‘came about in an intellectual environment which valued individuality and subjectivity’.⁸⁰

Liu is not the only scholar who has pointed out this shift in the narrative structure of Chinese novels. In his 1973 study *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*, Leo Ou-fan Lee examines Western influences on the May Fourth writers, drawing analogies between European and the May Fourth romanticism. He discerns two types of heroes prevalent in Western romantic writing during the 1920s: the passive-sentimental Wertherian hero who reflects the world of sentiment and ethics, and the dynamic Promethean type whose realm is the world of adventure. Both are based firstly on the assumption that Western literature provided the ‘romantic generation’ with these distinctive characteristics, and secondly, on the protagonist living in and exploring the world alone and, more significantly, as an individual.⁸¹

Fiction from the May Fourth period not only introduced the self-referential and subject-centred narrative mode; it also revealed the political and social events and circumstances of the 1920s and 1930s. It was a transitional period marked by constant turmoil, as Merle Goldman observes: ‘[t]he writers’ lives, as well as their work, were microcosms of their civilization in transition ... They witnessed civil and foreign wars, were involved in the political conflicts of the times, and suffered personal anguish. Their efforts to understand these events and the tensions between the old and the new are reflected in their

consciousness come to dominate the text’. See Denton *The Problematic of Self in Modern Chinese Literature*, 34.

⁷⁹ Lydia H. Liu, ‘Narratives on Modern Selfhood: First-Person Fiction in May Fourth Literature’, in *Politics, Ideology, and Literary Discourse in Modern China: Theoretical Interventions and Cultural Critique*, ed. Kang Liu and Xiaobing Tang (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 102–23.

⁸⁰ Christopher Keaveney, *The Subversive Self in Modern Chinese Literature: The Creation Society’s Reinvention of the Japanese Shishosetsu* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 5. Keaveney traces pre-modern influences in the chapter “Antecedents for Self-referentiality in premodern and early modern Chinese Literature.” See Keaveney, 30–35.

⁸¹ Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*, 279–83.

works'.⁸² Their works depict a hero challenged by the cruelty of reality:

[They are] stories of youth trapped in and rebelling against traditional society. Some of them may have been autobiographical, but they are also biographies of their generation. The frustrations and dreams are also the frustrations and dreams of an entire generation's search for meaning and purpose in a China these writers described as morally bankrupt, politically disjointed, oppressed by warlords and bureaucrats, and humiliated by foreign powers.⁸³

Due to the radical social, cultural, and political changes of the early twentieth century the protagonist in the May Fourth narratives is generally caught between tradition and modernity, disillusion and enthusiasm, trapped in a society in which their reconciliation with life and prospects for social integration seem impossible. This contradictory picture is a distinctive characteristic of the May Fourth Bildungsroman; as Hua Li concludes, 'the *chengzhang xiaoshuo* [Bildungsroman] in the May Fourth era is marked by the exploration of selfhood, self-confessional and decadent sentiments, an iconoclastic and nationalistic spirit, and self narrative form'.⁸⁴ However, despite the turmoil and the protagonist's painstaking growth, the tension between individual and society is not necessarily resolved in the Bildungsroman. As Jeffrey Sammons points out, it is the 'evolutionary change within the self that matters: *Bildung* is not merely the accumulation of experience, not merely maturation in the form of fictional biography. There must be a sense of evolutionary change within the self, a teleology of individuality, even if the novel, as many do, comes to doubt or deny the possibility of achieving a gratifying result'.⁸⁵

3.3.4 "Humane literature" and humanism

The shift towards intense awareness of a new selfhood in the narratives of the first decades of the twentieth-century China also prompted increased emphasis

⁸² Merle Goldman and John Berninghausen, *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, Harvard East Asian Series (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 4.

⁸³ Goldman and Berninghausen, 4.

⁸⁴ Li, *Contemporary Chinese Fiction* by Su Tong and Yu Hua, 48 (brackets in original).

⁸⁵ Sammons, 'The Bildungsroman for Nonspecialists: An Attempt at a Clarification', 41.

on the human and humanity. For instance in 1918 the writer Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967), a key figure in the May Fourth Movement, published ‘Humane Literature’ (*Ren de wenxue* 人的文學), an essay in which he proposes both humanism and individualism as the leading spirit of modern Chinese literature. Zhou’s notion of humanity is ‘an individualistic ideology of basing everything on man’, since ‘all men constitute humanity, and each is but one unit of humanity’.⁸⁶ It is an understanding of an all-encompassing and universal humanitarianism that relies on mutually-beneficial relations among men, grounded on ‘benefiting oneself by benefiting others, and benefiting others through benefiting oneself’. What Zhou calls ‘humane literature’ includes recordings and studies of human life, with human morality as its basis. His ‘humane literature’ can be divided into two categories: firstly, the ‘description of the ideal life, or writings on the heights of advancement attainable by men’, and secondly, the ‘descriptions of man’s ordinary life, or his inhuman life, which can also contribute toward the purpose of the study’.⁸⁷ These writings can serve in either way: as a contribution or as hindrance to the growth of human nature.

Zhou Zuoren was not the only intellectual who adopted an affirmative humanistic ideology. According to Ye Ziming, the writers Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, Lu Xun 魯迅 and Hu Shi 胡適 were part of the ‘May Fourth humanism’ which advocated the ‘liberation of man’ as a result of which ‘the affirmation and spread of the value, dignity and creative spirit of man became the creed followed by the advanced intellectuals of all ranks’.⁸⁸ The influence of humanism is evident in

⁸⁶ Zuoren Zhou, ‘Humane Literature’, in *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893–1945*, ed. and trans. Kirk A. Denton (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 154. Original text in Zhou Zuoren 周作人, ‘Ren de wenxue 人的文學 (Humane Literature)’, *Xin qingnian* 新青年 (*New Youth*) 5, no. 6 (December 1918).

⁸⁷ Zhou, ‘Humane Literature’, 155. Zhou’s use of the words inhuman and non-human is not evaluative. He notes that the difference between human and inhuman is the attitude that informs the writing: whether it is dignified or profligate. For instance he considers writings that evoke human morality human literature.

⁸⁸ Zeming Ye, ‘Humanism and the May Fourth New Literature’, in *Interliterary and Intraliterary Aspects of the May Fourth Movement 1919 in China: Proceedings of the International Sinological Symposium, Smolenice Castle, March 13–17, 1989*, ed. Marián Gálik (Bratislava: Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 1990), 202. As Yang Jianling notes, ‘important changes took place in literature during this period as the idea of humanism became prevalent’ and the cultivation

their writing, which emphasizes the individual as a model. But as Ye Ziming states, ‘the discovery of man, that is, the development of individuality (i.e. individualism) became the chief aim of the “May Fourth” New Literature Movement, to which literary criticism and literary creation of that time were both consciously and unconsciously advancing’.⁸⁹ May Fourth intellectuals, therefore, were inclined to write in a realistic manner, since ‘the combination between Communist principles and realism in literature offered a sense of moral engagement with society’ on the one hand, and provided them with ‘a set of ideas intended to enable individualism to comprehend the reality of human nature’ on the other.⁹⁰ Yet the human subject depicted as a wartime Communist hero continued to exist in Chinese communist literature in the 1940s. Until the Communist takeover in 1949, such heroes ‘[were] not only granted a certain amount of individuality but [were] often allowed to develop from ignorant peasants or petty-bourgeois intellectuals into firm believers, reflecting the maturing process of the Party as it grew from a small group to a powerful ruling clique’.⁹¹ After 1949 the image of the hero was fully submerged in socialist collectivity at the expense of its initiative and individuality. The Party not only discarded the hero, it also did not tolerate autonomous subjectivity.⁹²

The Western notion of humanism that entered the Chinese discourse around the May Fourth era affected the intellectuals’ perception of what it is to be human. Li Dazhao 李大釗, for instance, discusses the Western concept of humanism and how its implementation in traditional Chinese culture is possible.⁹³ The translator Feng Zhi 馮至 wrote an essay titled ‘On Humanism and Individualism in European Bourgeois Literature’ (1958) in which he mentions

and education of the human were brought into main focus by the May Fourth intellectuals. See Yang Jianlong 楊劍龍, ‘Debates over the Theory of Human Nature in the History of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature’, in *Belief, History, and the Individual in Modern Chinese Literary Culture*, ed. Artur K. Wardega (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 62–63.

⁸⁹ Ye, ‘Humanism and the May Fourth New Literature’, 204.

⁹⁰ Tsai, “‘Ziyoutan’ Revisited: The Literature Supplement and Its Writers’, 141–42.

⁹¹ Cai, *The Subject in Crisis in Contemporary Chinese Literature*, 31.

⁹² Cai, 31–34.

⁹³ Ye, ‘Humanism and the May Fourth New Literature’, 203.

Goethe's novels *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and *Faust* in terms of humanistic education. Feng speaks of its beneficial value to the collective, just as Zhou Zuoren had pointed out in his essay a few decades earlier. Feng notes that 'with his novel "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship" [Goethe] proposed an educational ideal that is necessary for educating children systematically and collectively. Everyone has to be useful to others, and each person needs a skill that benefits the collective'.⁹⁴

3.3.5 Leftist literature

From the mid-1920s through to the early 1930s many May Fourth writers took a leftist direction. This marked a decisive shift, as Lee puts it, from 'Literary Revolution to Revolutionary Literature'.⁹⁵ According to Feng Liping, given the quest for social significance for their works and the lack of socio-moral and financial support from a substantial readership, many writers came under the wing of the rising CCP.⁹⁶ The May Thirtieth events in 1925 may have also facilitated the rise of revolutionary literature and the resulting May Thirtieth movement.⁹⁷ Proletarian literature (*puluo wenxue* 普羅文學) also joined the writers' and critics' discussions at this time, adding to the promotion of a revolutionary literature (*geming wenxue* 革命文學) and 'art for the masses' (*dazhong wenyu* 大眾文藝).⁹⁸ This period, with its emphasis on revolutionary literature, reflected Marxist class consciousness, in turn leading to the formation of the League of Left-wing writers in 1930.⁹⁹ The split between the KMT and CCP in 1927 marked another shift in the identity of Chinese youth depicted in

⁹⁴ Feng Zhi 馮至, 'Lüelun Ouzhou zichan jieji wenxueli de rendaozhuyi he gerenzhuyi 略論歐洲資產階級文學里的人道主義和個主義 (On Humanism and Individualism in European Bourgeois Literature)', *Journal of Peking University* 北京大學學報 (哲學社會科學版) 1, no. 19 (1958): 19.

⁹⁵ See Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*, 292.

⁹⁶ Feng, 'Democracy and Elitism: The May Fourth Ideal of Literature', 187.

⁹⁷ Wang-chi Wong, *Politics and Literature in Shanghai: The Chinese League of Left-Wing Writers, 1930–1936*, *Studies on East Asia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 13.

⁹⁸ Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 98.

⁹⁹ Wong, *Politics and Literature in Shanghai*, 9–32. Wong discusses in this chapter the various groups and writers which were involved in the revolutionary literature movement.

literature from 'enlightened and new' to 'progressive and revolutionary'.¹⁰⁰ Before 1928, May Fourth writers had depicted disappointed young protagonists struggling with traditional Chinese ethical codes: after 1928 leftist writers focused on young characters devoting themselves to the revolution and the future of the nation. Li Hua concludes that 'the leftists' *chengzhang xiaoshuo* during the decade following 1928 mainly focused on young protagonists finding a meaningful path to their future and devoting themselves to the revolution, pursuing a moral transformation from selfish ignorance to revolutionary enlightenment'.¹⁰¹

This shift in subject matter also affected the characterization of the protagonists, as Kirk Denton observes: '[t]he actual representation of characters' minds in leftist literature was, for the most part, formulaic and superficial. It is not so much that leftist writers denied their characters a psychic life, but that the minds portrayed were flat, unambiguous, and transparently clear'.¹⁰² In the 1930s themes became more diverse and addressed urban experiences such as 'modern city culture – the erotic female body, urban exoticism, and the bourgeois lifestyle' seen in the work of neo-perceptionists and nativists. The two following decades included the Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945 and the civil war between KMT and the CCP from 1946 to 1949, and the turmoil that accompanied them. During these war years literature was produced to 'save' the country. With Mao Zedong's 'Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art' (1942) came an era in which literature focused on national salvation and revolutionary collectivism.

3.4 Youth-centred discourse in China and Taiwan

The life-stage of youth, as mentioned in section 1.4, plays a crucial role in the Bildungsroman hero's growth. Western literary scholars such as Franco Moretti, Jerome Buckley, and Jed Etsy discuss the genre and the protagonist's formation in terms of youth as an essential part of the individual's life. Moretti, for instance,

¹⁰⁰ Li, *Contemporary Chinese Fiction* by Su Tong and Yu Hua, 53.

¹⁰¹ Li, 52.

¹⁰² Denton, *The Problematic of Self in Modern Chinese Literature*, 14.

links the emergence of the Bildungsroman genre with the concept of modernity. He argues that the emergence of the genre was symptomatic of the emergence of European modernity and serves as a symbol of modernity. At this point youth comes into play, “chosen” over the multitude of other possible signs as the new epoch’s “specific material sign” for its ability to *accentuate* modernity’s dynamism and instability’. ‘Youth is ... modernity’s “essence”, the sign of a world that seeks its meaning in the *future* rather than in the past’.¹⁰³

3.4.1 *Shifting meanings of “youth” in China*

The Bildungsroman and its emergence in twentieth-century China is interesting on at least two accounts. First, literary critics focusing on the Chinese coming-of-age novels of twentieth century linked the genre with modernity and the concept of youth; second, it is not only youth, but also, and at the same time, modernity that inevitably points to a nation’s future – its growth, dynamism, and progress – as proclaimed by the intellectuals of the New Culture Movement.¹⁰⁴

The journals *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian* 新青年) and *New Tide* (*Xinchao* 新潮), both of which were extremely influential in propagating and promoting the ideas and visions of the Enlightenment Movement. The launch in 1915 of *New Youth*, originally *Youth Magazine* (*Qingnian zazhi* 青年雜誌), is considered ‘one of the earliest and most important platforms for the translation of Western literature’;¹⁰⁵ according to Wang its formation produced a group of intellectual and moral leaders.¹⁰⁶ *New Youth’s* editorial board consisted mostly of university professors who contributed substantially to the journal’s success. It was the leading voice of the New Culture Movement, although Chen Pingyuan notes that

¹⁰³ Moretti, *The Way of the World*, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Duara, among other scholars, challenges the common perception of ‘... the movement’s claims to be the voice of enlightenment, progress, science, nation, feminism, and the like. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 5; Wang Hui, ‘The Fate of “Mr. Science” in China: The Concept of Science and Its Application in Modern Chinese Thought’, *Positions: Asia Critique* 3, no. 1 (1 February 1995): 1–68, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10679847-3-1-1>; Liu, *Translingual Practice*.

¹⁰⁵ Qi, *Western Literature in China and the Translation of a Nation*, 2012, 78.

¹⁰⁶ Xiaoming Wang, *A Journal and a ‘Society’: On the ‘May Fourth’ Literary Tradition*, 1999, 1–39.

the *New Youth* group may have had difficulties finding common ground in terms of shared purposes other than their opposition to traditional Chinese culture and advocacy of the duo 'Mr. Democracy' and 'Mr. Science'.¹⁰⁷ The journal and the New Culture Movement transformed Chinese youth and its identity from 'modern students' to 'enlightened new youth'. Youth discourse found its way into such journals: in its 1915 inaugural issue one of *New Youth's* chief editors, Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879–1942), published his seminal essay 'Call to Youth', describing the meaning of youth, in comparison to age, for society:

Youth is like early spring, like the rising sun, like trees and grass in bud, like a newly sharpened blade. It is the most valuable period of life. The function of youth in society is the same as that of a fresh and vital cell in a human body. In the processes of metabolism, the old and the rotten are incessantly eliminated to be replaced by the fresh and living ... If metabolism functions properly in a human body, the person will be healthy; if the old and rotten cells accumulate and fill the body, the person will die. If metabolism functions properly in a society, it will flourish; if old and rotten elements fill the society, then it will cease to exist.¹⁰⁸

New Tide (*Xinchao* 新潮), founded in 1919, was another periodical and society that was involved in the youth discourse. It was founded by Beijing University students with the aid of their mentors from *New Youth* magazine, and was propelled by the intergenerational collaboration of its members. Compared to *New Youth*, Vera Schwarcz notes, they advocated 'a new, more activist vision of enlightenment', but with a strong quest for a new youth that widened the disparity between students and teachers. Schwarcz's study focuses on the life and careers of some prominent members of *New Tide*, but she also shows the wide generation gap between society members which sparked a dispute on the problem of new versus old.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Chen and Hockx, *Touchees of History*, 81–83. Chen provides a detailed discussion on the rise and failures of the journal. Chen and Hockx, 67–150. During the New Culture Movement the intellectuals blamed Confucian culture for China's weakness. Chen Duxiu demanded the introduction of Western concepts such as democracy and science as anthropomorphised in Mr. Democracy (*Dexiansheng* 德先生) and Mr. Science (*Saixiansheng* 塞先生).

¹⁰⁸ Ssu-yü Teng and John King Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839–1923*, Atheneum Paperbacks (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 240–46.

¹⁰⁹ Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment*, 56.

Speaking of the image of youth in Chinese coming-of-age stories, both Li Hua and Song Mingwei's study, as mentioned above, argue that the rise of youth-oriented discourse during the May Fourth era was entangled with (the quest for) modernity, and at the same time resulted in the formation of the Chinese Bildungsroman. In the context of China at the beginning of the twentieth century, youth, and the many images it evokes, took on different literal meanings and various connotations. In a paper published in 2016, "Talks at [the roundtable] "New Reflections on *New Youth*: Liberalism and Radicalism in Modern China" David Der-Wei Wang states that 'the discovery, or even invention of 'youth' – represented one of the most important phenomena in the making of Chinese modernity'. Wang traces the genealogy of 'youth' and the concepts behind the youth discourse that runs like a thread through the first half of the twentieth century. The evocation and powerful appeal of youth was part of the Chinese modernization project, which led to a massive propaganda drive in the name of *qingchun* (青春) (youth). Wang raises some interesting points, although he fails to mention the different meanings that 'youth' took on during this period.¹¹⁰ Youth-oriented narratives did not emerge until the turn of the twentieth century. Mei Jialing raises the interesting point that 'there are many literary writings that praise "youth" highly, whereas "youth" as a topic that is specifically embodied in a character has never played an important role in traditional Chinese literature'.¹¹¹

In a 2015 study Song Mingwei gives an overview of the philological connotations of the three terms *qingchun* 青春, *shaonian* 少年, and *qingnian* 青年 which can all be translated as both youth and young. The changing meanings of

¹¹⁰ David Der-Wei Wang, "Talks at [the roundtable] "New Reflections on New Youth: Liberalism and Radicalism in Modern China"", in *Sixiangshi 5: Mingqing sixiangshi 思想史 5: 明清思想史 (Intellectual History 5: Ming and Qing Intellectual History)*, ed. Wang Changwei 王昌偉 et al. (Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi 聯經出版事業公司 (Linking Publishing Company), 2016), 311–19.

¹¹¹ Mei Jialing 梅家玲, *Cong shaonian Zhongguo dao shaonian Taiwan: ershi shiji Zhongwen xiaoshuo de qingchun xiangxiang yu guozu lunshu 從少年中國到少年台灣: 二十世紀中文小說的青春想像與國族論述 (From Young China to Young Taiwan: The Image of Youth and the Discourse on the Nation in Chinese Novels in the 20th Century)* (Taipei: Maitian chuban 麥田出版 (Rye Field Publishing Company), 2013), 5.

these terms exemplify linguistic shifts over the course of time, which is why Song places them in their specific contexts to illustrate the subtle differences among them. Speaking of the twentieth-century youth discourse Song's overview departs from the term *qingchun* 青春, which he translates literally as 'green spring' as a metaphor for youth. At the time of the New Culture Movement, on which Song's study primarily focuses, the term *qingchun* 青春 was introduced in an essay by the author Li Dazhao 李大釗 (1889–1927) in 1916 to imply both spring and youth. In the 1930s and 1940s the meaning of *qingchun* settled completely on youth. At the turn of the twenty-first century Liang Qichao 梁啟超 used another term for youth, *shaonian* 少年, in his famous essay 'Ode to a Young China' (1900) (*Shaonian Zhongguo shuo* 少年中國說), which enjoyed great popularity among late Qing progressive intellectuals and was in line with the idea of national rejuvenation. Another youth paradigm shift happened during the Republican years when *shaonian* 少年 was replaced by *qingnian* 青年; the latter addressed young people, especially in 1915 when Chen Duxiu launched *La Jeunesse* (*Xin qingnian* 新青年), an important New Culture Movement media outlet (renamed *New Youth* for copyright reasons), while *shaonian* 少年 was narrowed down to mean 'teenagers'. The phrase 'new youth' became a 'neologism of the Republican era' symbolizing a new generation of youth that broke with Confucian tradition and strove to move forward. This new image created a collective identity: '[i]n the new literature of the time period, a "new youth" often denotes an [enlightened] enlightenment intellectual, an educator, or a revolutionary who embraces the new ideas of democracy and liberty, and ... whose yearning for a new beginning in life enchants him or her'.¹¹²

Following the establishment of the PRC in 1949, youth remained a collective concept – although with a strong social and political meaning – chiefly to help to consolidate the new regime. Anthony Sherman Chang and Wen Shih's

¹¹² See 'Green Spring': An Interpretation, in: Song, *Young China*, 23–31. Song points out that youth (*qingchun* 青春) has many philological connotations which he cannot elaborate in full detail, although one should keep in mind that its meaning varies depending on the traditional/modern context, and that it goes beyond a mere dictionary definition. Song, 30f. (brackets in original).

essay 'The Political Role of Youth' illustrates how the Chinese Communist regime targeted the young generation aged 15–24, counting on their support. The CCP had high hopes for this generation as it was aiming for political homogeneity, which was much more difficult to find among the pre-1949 generation. The communist regime was also aware that it is easier to mould young people, who are more inclined to accept new conditions. For instance the Young Communist League (YCL) was in fact an influential state apparatus ('a machine for moulding the minds of China's youth') that recruited a huge number of young Chinese in their formative years, paving the way for them to join the CCP.¹¹³

Zhong Xueping's paper on the image of youth represented in films of the 1950s and 1960s points out that these films were highly politicized, in many cases conveying a didactic and ideological message. They depict the contrast between the old and the new society, the latter indicating a bright new future. For Zhong, youth symbolizes a new and modern state, particularly with youth as a propaganda tool: 'not only is *qingchun* the vehicle for the didactic message explicitly conveyed in the film and a discursive construct for identification, it also becomes a space for fantasy, indeed a space that generates pleasure and desire'.¹¹⁴

The different terms used for youth and their shifting meanings show how these phrases underwent radical transformations to fit the current political agenda, in particular during China's modernization process. The word youth had a positive connotation as a symbol for a life stage that promised everything worth longing and hoping for.¹¹⁵ As mentioned, the Chinese Bildungsroman studies by Li

¹¹³ Anthony Sherman Chang and Wen Shih, 'The Political Role of Youth', in *Youth in China*, ed. Stuart E. Kirby (Hong Kong: Dragonfly Books, 1965), 130, 113–62.

¹¹⁴ Zhong Xueping, "'Long Live Youth' and the Ironies of Youth and Gender in Chinese Films of the 1950s and 1960s', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 11, no. 2 (1999): 172. Zhong Xueping's essay discusses the different implications of 'youth' represented in films of the Mao era. She differentiates between 'youth' in history and youth in the social sciences: *qingnian* 青年 refers to a young person, whereas *qingchun* 青春 is a temporal as well as a spatial term. The latter refers to a period of time and is, grammatically speaking, according to Zhong, an "'object" that one can squander, sacrifice, remember, and commemorate'. Xueping, 156.

¹¹⁵ David Der-Wei Wang proposes a different perspective of youth (*qingchun* 青春) as 'something imposing, sometimes even coercive, and sometimes a kind of surveillance power', although he does not specify or provide a context. See Wang, 'Talks at [the roundtable] "New Reflections on New Youth: Liberalism and Radicalism in Modern China"', 319.

Hua (2011) and Song Mingwei (2015) connect the emergence of the genre with the image of youth and the rise of youth-centred writing. Several recent Chinese-language studies have incorporated *qingchun* 青春 in their vocabulary, particularly when discussing the coming-of-age stories in terms of a specific time period or when focusing on a distinctive group such as female writers, May-Fourth intellectuals, or post-1990s youth. In the 1990s female writers especially started to explore their path of growth and maturation. A new literary trend of 'youth literature' (*qingchun wenxue* 青春文學) or 'youth novels' (*qingchun xiaoshuo* 青春小說) appeared in the late 1990s China.

3.4.2 *The image of "youth" and coming-of-age novels in Taiwan*

Youth-oriented discourse was not bound to Mainland China; it extended to Taiwan in a development that can be compared to that of Hong Kong, with the 'youth' motif part of a nation-building rhetoric that found its way into the production and dissemination of Taiwanese Bildungsromans. As in Hong Kong, the emphasis on the notion of youth emerged in Taiwan, touching upon the relationship between Taiwan and Mainland China with the images of the orphan, and the father-and-child constellation (in the case of Hong Kong it is often the mother and child). Youth-oriented discourse in Taiwan is included in literary studies focusing on Mainland Chinese writers who emigrated to Taiwan in the 1950s who identify the growth of the individual with that of a nation in their coming-of-age novels. Their books can be read as responses to their personal history in China on the one hand and their accommodation into the Taiwanese context on the other.

For instance Mei Jialing's 梅家玲 monograph *From Young China to Young Taiwan: The Image of Youth and the Discourse on the Nation in Chinese Novels in the Twentieth Century* (2013) offers a literary-historical analysis of the images of youth in China and Taiwan; it traces the source of the discourse on 'youth' in China starting in the twentieth century in which the literary images of the 'growth of youth' (*qingshaonian chengzhang* 青少年成長) and the 'growth of a nation' (*guojia chengzhang* 國家成長) were generated as an interchangeable metaphor.

What stands out is that ‘youth’ acquired several meanings over time, but most importantly ‘is in fact a rhetorical strategy that includes all the hopes of youth; also the so-called “young China” is a call for a new kind of “self-renaming”’.¹¹⁶ In having that effect, ‘youth’ became not only a constituent of a novel but was utilized as part of the political agenda, as Mei Jialing 梅家玲 puts it:

As we shall see, from the very beginning Chinese novels of the twentieth century had already become ‘youth’-inscribed cultural politics, regardless the comparison between the different perspectives of traditional literature and modern literature or the atmosphere of ‘feeling anxious about the country’ in that era while observing it from the perspective during the process of China’s pursuit of ‘modernity’.¹¹⁷

Taiwan’s post-war coming-of-age novels include topics centering on fathers and sons and the relationship to the homeland (*jiaguo* 家國). ‘Home’, as a metaphor, has a crucial role here as the stories are about settling down with a home and family, leaving home, and returning home. Mei Jialing asserts that relationships among the family members reveal the complex entanglement of bloodline inheritance and cultural-political identity. Taiwanese youth-centred novels from the 1940s to the 1990s tend to depict orphans, starting in the mid-1940s with Wu Zhuoliu’s 吳濁流 *Orphan in Asia* (*Yaxiya de gu’er* 亞細亞的孤兒) (1946).¹¹⁸ From the 1960s to the 1980s the image of the illegitimate/unfilial son emerged in novels such as Wang Wenxing’s 王文興 *Family Catastrophe* (*Jiabian* 家變) (1972) and Bai Xianyong’s 白先勇 *Chrystal Boys* (*Niezi* 孽子) (1981),¹¹⁹ taking the place of the orphan. In the 1990s the ‘feral child’ enters the plot in stories such as Zhang

¹¹⁶ Mei Jialing 梅家玲, *Cong shaonian Zhongguo dao shaonian Taiwan: ershi shiji Zhongwen xiaoshuo de qingchun xiangxiang yu guozu lunshu* 從少年中國到少年台灣：二十世紀中文小說的青春想像與國族論述 (*From Young China to Young Taiwan: The Image of Youth and the Discourse on the Nation in Chinese Novels in the 20th Century*), 8.

¹¹⁷ Mei Jialing 梅家玲, 11.

¹¹⁸ *Orphan in Asia*, translated in English by Ioannis Mentzas and published by Columbia University Press, 2006.

¹¹⁹ *Chrystal Boys*, translated in English by Howard Goldblatt and published by Gay Sunshine Press, 1981.

Dachun's 張大春 *Wild Kids* (*Ye haizi* 野孩子) (1996)¹²⁰ and Wu Jiwen's 吳繼文 *The Turbulence of the Milky Way* (*Tianhe liaoluan* 天河撩亂) (1998). In general, as Mei Jialing observes, the word 'youth' acquired different images, metamorphosising 'from the "orphan" who has no home and the "illegitimate son" who seeks a home to the "feral child" who has a home, but abandons it'.¹²¹

There has been growing demand for coming-of-age stories in Taiwan in recent years. A 2004 publication by Yang Jiaxian 楊佳嫻, revised in 2013, offers a compilation of Bildungsromans covering work from the older and younger generations of Taiwanese writers. In the preface to the book Yang Jiaxian discusses the Bildungsroman genre in terms of the European Enlightenment. She mentions Immanuel Kant's 'Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?' (1784) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795–96) which, as she states, played an influential and crucial role in the emergence of the Bildungsroman. She sees the genre as not necessarily tackling the problems of society but rather appealing to readers' emotions by showing the process of self-definition and finding one's place in life. 'Since the Bildungsroman is about the process of growth, it inevitably includes the writer's personal experience. In particular, Taiwanese Bildungsromans tend to be emotional and tragic. When depicting the difficulties and depression of youth, these works, in comparison to other genres, unavoidably draw from the experience of an author's writing process'.¹²²

Given the depression, anxiety, and frustration that individuals experience during the process of growing up, personal development does not always lead to successful accommodation in society. In the context of the Bildungsroman genre

¹²⁰ *Wild Kids. Two Novels about Growing Up*, translated in English by Michael Berry and published by Columbia University Press, 2000.

¹²¹ Mei Jialing 梅家玲, *Cong shaonian Zhongguo dao shaonian Taiwan: ershi shiji Zhongwen xiaoshuo de qingchun xiangxiang yu guozu lunshu* 從少年中國到少年台灣：二十世紀中文小說的青春想像與國族論述 (*From Young China to Young Taiwan: The Image of Youth and the Discourse on the Nation in Chinese Novels in the 20th Century*), 24f.

¹²² Yang Jiaxian 楊佳嫻, ed., *Taiwan chengzhang xiaoshuo xuan* 臺灣成長小說選 (*An Anthology of Taiwanese Coming-of-Age Novels*), 2nd ed., Ji lie 技列 (Skill Series) (Taipei: Eryu wenhua chuban 二魚文化出版 (Two Fishes Publishing Co.), 2004), 12f.

in Taiwan, Xu Jingwen's 許靜文 monograph investigates the Anti-Bildungsroman in contemporary coming-of-age and youth literature. She concludes that a few Taiwan Bildungsromans indicate an anti-growth tendency, although these two types of the same genre do not appear to be mutually exclusive: if anything, their antagonistic characteristics open up further possibilities for evaluation and interpretation.¹²³

Taiwan literature of the 1950s and 1960s has come to attention of literary scholars who attempt to look beyond the prevailing common genres of 'combat literature' (*zhandou wenxue* 戰鬥文學) and 'nostalgic literature' (*xiangchou wenxue* 鄉愁文學) promoted in the late 1940s by the KMT regime on the one hand and created by Mainland writers mourning for their homeland on the other. A 2016 study by Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱, *The Trajectory of Growth: Writings on Growth by Taiwan Writers in the 1950s* sheds light on two decades of post-war literary-historical development under the KMT from which the Taiwan Bildungsroman emerged. The subject matter during this period was dominated by anti-Communist and nostalgic sentiment (*fangong huaixiang* 反共懷鄉),¹²⁴ with a multitude of novels endorsing anti-Communism circulating throughout the 1950s.¹²⁵ In her book Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱 mentions that interpreting and sorting the literature of this era into these two main categories, as many literary

¹²³ Xu Jingwen 許靜文, *Taiwan qingshaonian chengzhang xiaoshuo zhong de fanchengzhang* 臺灣青少年成長小說中的反成長 (*Anti-Formation in Taiwan's Youth and Coming-of-Age Novels*), 1st ed., Xueshu zhuzuo xilie 學術著作系科 (Academic Writing Series) 5 (Taipei: Xiuwei zixun keji 秀威資訊技列 (Showwe Publishing), 2009), 41, 125.

¹²⁴ In the following, Taiwan literature refers to a body of literature coming from Taiwan, as Tang points out, "literature from Taiwan", "Taiwan literature", and "Taiwanese literature" are used as interchangeably in scholarly writing. Tang See Xiaobing Tang, 'On the Concept of Taiwan Literature', *Modern China* 25, no. 4 (1999): 379, 415.

¹²⁵ David Der-Wei Wang, *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 183–223. Wang examines in this chapter the personal trauma of the Chinese émigré writer Jiang Gui 姜貴 (Wang Yijian 王意監) and his anti-communist novel *A Tale of Modern Monsters*, which depicts the terror of the Chinese Communist revolution. It also thematizes the 1949 political divide which for him reflected 'not merely a changing of parties in power; it [indicated] a break in the unified imaginary of Chinese history and geography and, as a result, a dissipation of the "moral occult" inherent in the Chinese experience'. Wang, 190.

historians do, would simplify the body of literature.¹²⁶ She links the emergence of the 1950s Taiwan Bildungsroman written by native elites (*bentu jingying* 本土菁英) with the ideological and political underpinnings of the May Fourth literature.¹²⁷ With references to the May Fourth heritage, she reveals that ‘in addition to the intention of reforming the nation, the May Fourth literature shows a strong sense of selfhood and individualism; it describes familiar things and personal experiences in an autobiographical and realistic style’.¹²⁸ Situating the genre within its historical context, it is obvious that selfhood and individualism presupposed the awakening of the individual. The Enlightenment Movement happened in two different parts of the world: in eighteenth-century Europe and in the first decades of the twentieth century in China, resulting in the discovery of the individual and facilitating the emergence of coming-of-age stories. The Taiwanese Bildungsromans, too, have growth and the individual’s accommodation in society as the principal themes of the genre.¹²⁹ Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱 mentions parallels between Mainland intellectuals who moved to Taiwan (*qian tai zhishi fenzi* 遷台知識份子) and Taiwanese native elites (*bentu jingying* 本土菁英), whose personal stories are not only connected to a larger historical-political context but both of which also appear to link different kinds of sentiments in their writing: the former combine the theme of ‘anxiety about the country’ (*ganshi youguo* 感時憂國) with romantic individualism (*geren zhuyi* 個人主義), whereas the latter adopt characteristics of ‘colonial resistance and oppression’ (*fankang zhimin yapo* 反抗殖民壓迫) together with the ‘awakening of the individual’ (*geren juexing* 個人覺醒) as part of the Taiwan New Literature Movement. Both groups of intellectuals have one fundamental trait in common: ‘they reveal in their texts that the homeland is a hidden thread that runs through

¹²⁶ Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱, *Chengzhang de jixian: Taiwan wushi niandai xiaoshuojia de chengzhang shuxie (1950–1969)* 成長的跡線：臺灣五〇年代小說家的成長書寫 (1950–1969) (*The Trajectory of Growth: Writing on Growth by Taiwan Writers Born after the 1950s (1950–1969)*) (Taipei: Wanjuan lou 萬卷樓 (Wanjuan House), 2016), 13.

¹²⁷ Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱, 62–66.

¹²⁸ Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱, 10.

¹²⁹ Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱, 13.

their personal growth; that is, a piece of self-growth is concealed in the words behind the image of the homeland. Obviously, whether they are provincial citizens or not, intellectuals who find themselves in a transitional period were always faced with the problem of growth: how to construct their subjectivity and integrate themselves into society'.¹³⁰ Furthermore, Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱 argues, there is another layer to the common and widely disseminated 1950s anti-communist Taiwan narratives. The Mainland Chinese émigré writers, influenced by the May Fourth movement, were focusing on constructing an image of their homeland, and so the 1950s writers produced a body of growth narratives that were autobiographical and at the same time served as a main narrative strategy, creating an image of the homeland. The growth of the individual and the historical development of the greater self can be considered a 'double thread that furthers the mode of writing. Individual growth (*geren chengzhang* 個人成長) and the growth of the nation (*jiaguó chengzhang* 家國成長) are intrinsically linked and interwoven in these narratives: '[c]ertainly, one is unable to detach the process of writing from the historical time in terms of literature. The individual and the homeland emerge as a common growth trajectory, the description of the homeland's great narrative mutually overlapping the small narrative of the individual's practical ideals'.¹³¹ These two growth narratives perpetuate one another and generate a Bildungsroman that transcends spatio-temporal historical change.

¹³⁰ Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱, 14f.

¹³¹ Dai Huaxuan 戴華萱, 87–88, 95. The terms *xiaowo* 小我 for 'I' or 'individual' (literally meaning 'the small self') and *dawo* 大我 for 'the greater self' as used by Dai are two dialectical terms originating in the 1919 essay 'Immortality: my religion' (*Bu xiu: wo de zongjiao* 不朽: 我的宗教) by Hu Shi, in which he addresses the May Fourth notion of the individual, nation, and society. The individual (*xiaoji* 小己) is subordinated to society (*daji* 大己), just as a citizen is a part and a member of the nation-state: 'The small self of mine is not an autonomous entity, but is joined by direct and indirect relationships with the whole society and of the world'. Quoted in Kirk A. Denton, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 45; See also Liu, 'Translingual Practice: The Discourse of Individualism between China and the West', 95.

Summary

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries witnessed a rise in Chinese-language literary criticism of the Bildungsroman. The German genre found fertile ground in China in the second half of the twentieth century, chiefly through the introduction and dissemination of Western literary works translated into Chinese. This was a period in Chinese literary history that was very receptive to Western values and ideas. During this era Chinese intellectuals and writers were strong advocates of foreign theories and thought. Particularly during the May Fourth period, concepts such as selfhood, nationhood, and the trope of youth were introduced and implemented in Chinese modernity discourse, facilitating a shift to a different perspective on the human and the self in relation to its role in society. In the same context the intellectuals re-evaluated their status and responsibility as literati in Chinese society. In the wake of the pursuit of Chinese (literary) modernity, the trope of youth acquired new meanings, including the growth and rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In this context the emergence of the Chinese Bildungsroman was a response to a paradigm shift that reflected the overturning of traditional Chinese society. The genre highlights wider historical change and responds to social crisis and instability, and has been revisited and incorporated into Taiwanese and Hong Kong literary studies in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries with regard to its focus on youth and growth as well as the individual's place in society and history.

4 THE CULTURAL AND LITERARY FIELD IN 1950S HONG KONG

The 1950s was a crucial period for Hong Kong: after more than a hundred years of British colonial rule, it experienced a large influx of refugees from Mainland China. Around the time of the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, hundreds of thousands of Chinese fled the Communist revolution, heading for the crown colony to live in what many envisioned as temporary exile. By the end of June 1950, border control, first imposed only in May, counted more than 700,000 refugees entering Hong Kong. By 1952 over 40 per cent of Hong Kong's population were exiles from the Mainland.¹ Moreover, in the ten years from 1946 to 1956 Hong Kong's population increased from 1.6 to 2.5 million, a demographic shift that drastically changed its political and cultural landscape. The Hong Kong government's 1956 annual report describes the influx of Chinese refugees from the Mainland as a 'problem of people' – the problem being 'the consequences of excess population on finance, housing, education, medical services, social welfare, industry, commerce and even political relations and law'.² As a result of an inclusionary and exclusionary mechanism, Hong Kong's official publications from the late 1950s onwards replaced the term 'illegal immigrants' with 'squatters' and 'refugees', which had been used interchangeably

¹ Ming K. Chan and John D. Young, *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong between China and Britain 1842–1992*, An East Gate Book (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 131; Michael B. Share, *Where Empires Collided: Russian and Soviet Relations with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macao* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2007), 125ff. Refugee statistics, as Laura Madokoro's study shows, can convey a constructed image of reality. In the case of Hong Kong, many surveys in the 1950s were conducted to support certain political agendas. See Laura Madokoro, 'Surveying Hong Kong in the 1950s: Western Humanitarians and the "Problem" of Chinese Refugees', *Modern Asian Studies* 49, no. 02 (2015): 493–524, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X14000365>.

² Chi-Kwan Mark, 'The "Problem of People": British Colonials, Cold War Powers, and the Chinese Refugees in Hong Kong, 1949–62', *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 06 (2007): 1146, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X06002666>.

prior to that.³ In order to halt the increase of population in Hong Kong, the British, Chinese Nationalists and Americans sought ways of resettling the Chinese refugees in Southeast Asian countries. However, from 1949 onwards these countries, Taiwan among them, became less willing to accept refugees from Hong Kong, in part because of political security concerns and in part due to the rise of nationalism in Southeast Asia. It was not until the early 1960s that the Hong Kong government realized that ‘the only solution to the “problem of people” was not overseas emigration but local integration’.⁴

The refugee crisis in Hong Kong not only spectacularly increased the population of the colonial city, it also provided capital, entrepreneurial energy and cheap labour.⁵ The large number of intellectuals, artists, filmmakers and particularly writers among the refugees contributed to the media landscape in Hong Kong by launching publishing houses, newspapers, journals and other media outlets, and with their cultural and artistic work.⁶ In Hong Kong they found a political and artistic freedom that was lacking in the PRC.

Hong Kong’s cultural and literary field in the 1950s is entangled with a complex set of temporal and spatial peculiarities that generated and formed the

³ Mark, 1148. It is interesting to note at this point that neither the PRC nor the Hong Kong government wanted to employ refugee as a legitimate term. For the PRC ‘... there could be no Chinese “refugees” in Hong Kong ... for the simple reason that the PRC regarded British Hong Kong as part of China and all of its residents – indigenous and post-1949 refugee-seekers alike – as Chinese nationals’. And whereas ‘[t]he Hong Kong government steadfastly refused to employ the word “refugee” to describe the asylum-seekers from China, preferring instead the term “squatter”. Whereas ‘refugee’ implies a person seeking refuge, “squatter” denotes illegal encroachment’. Glen Peterson, ‘To Be or Not to Be a Refugee: The International Politics of the Hong Kong Refugee Crisis, 1949–55’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 181–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530802180924>.

⁴ Mark, ‘The “Problem of People”’, 1161, 1178. Mark’s paper offers a complex picture of how this refugee crisis was entangled with the context of the Cold War and became a matter of international concern.

⁵ Peterson, ‘To Be or Not to Be a Refugee: The International Politics of the Hong Kong Refugee Crisis, 1949–55’, 172.

⁶ Wu Yong’en 吳詠恩, ‘Nanlai yingren yu yueyu dianying pinglun 南來影人與粵語電影評論 (Discussion of Southbound Filmmakers and Cantonese Movies)’, in *Lingzhan yu Xianggang dianying 冷戰與香港電影 (The Cold War and Hong Kong Movies)*, ed. 黃愛玲 Huang Ailing and Li Peide 李培德 [Lee Pui-tak] (Hong Kong: 香港電影資料館 Hong Kong Film Archive, 2009); Wing Sang Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese*, Hong Kong Culture and Society (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 111.

unique literature that we know today. The year 1949 not only marked the moment at which the Communist Party proclaimed the establishment of the PRC but is also seen as a turning point in the literary history of Hong Kong.⁷ Following 1949 was a period including the initial years and polarities of the Cold War (1947–1991) on the one hand and the gradually increasing and effective intervention of the US in Hong Kong's media landscape, the so-called 'greenback culture' (*Lübei wenhua* 綠背文化) on the other.⁸ Also, due to China's involvement in the Korean war the 'Bamboo Curtain' divided China from capitalist and non-Communist states in Southeast Asia. Intellectuals in Hong Kong – a colonial and geopolitical entity – were caught between the political left and right camps, the local and the southbound, and a wishful past versus a neglected present.

This chapter first discusses the various images and impressions of Hong Kong created by Mainland Chinese intellectuals, many revealing their personal political and cultural viewpoints. It also shows the important link between the two cities of Shanghai and Hong Kong which was principally created and shaped by Mainland Chinese intellectuals and writers, many of whom had a polarized view of Hong Kong which stemmed from the fact that they compared it with their place of origin. Their visits to the British colony and the strong impressions it left on them which are documented in their essays, diaries, and notes. The general image of Hong Kong was significantly influenced by the Chinese literati, who were obviously not free of bias. Nonetheless, Hong Kong's literary space was chiefly dominated by these literati, who made a strong contribution to the cultural landscape that was strongly entangled with the ongoing political, demographic and social changes. In this period of upheaval and against the backdrop of the Cold War the colonial city had a comparatively liberal atmosphere in which

⁷ Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen] notes that the years 1948 and 1949 were turning points and therefore enormously important when examining the] 1950s. See Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], eds., *Xianggang xin wenxue nianbiao, 1950–1969 nian* 香港新文學年表, 1950–1969 年 (*A Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969*) (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu youxian gongsi 天地圖書有限公司 (Cosmos Book Ltd), 2000), 4.

⁸ 'Greenback' refers to the American dollar bill; 'greenback culture' describes all US-sponsored literary activities.

writers published and flourished, and the Mainland literati paved the way for the formation of new literary genres including migrant and modern literature. The last section of the chapter introduces China and Hong Kong's cinematic field and Hong Kong's coming-of-age movies of the 1950s to 1960s.⁹

4.1 Images and impressions of Hong Kong

From the nineteenth century onwards Chinese Mainland writers and intellectuals created various images and stereotypes of Hong Kong stemming from their travel and sojourns there and recorded as initial impressions. The following ten examples appeared in the journal *Renditions* (nos. 29 & 30) in 1988 under the heading 'Impressions of Hong Kong'. The poems and essays were chosen by the editors to show 'the strong cultural link between the territory and the Mainland'.¹⁰

The majority of these works are from the 1930s and include notes on the people, the beauty of Hong Kong's landscape and sights, conflicts and differences between the foreigners (British) and the locals (Chinese) regarding language,

⁹ For Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], both literature and film belong to Hong Kong's cultural landscape and they are intrinsically linked. Especially during the 1950s and 1960s, the connection between literature and film was very close, with a large number of novels adapted for film. See Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] and Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], eds., *Xianggang wenxue dianying pianmu 香港文學電影片目 (Catalogue of Hong Kong Literary Films)*, Lingnan daxue renwenxueke congshu 嶺南大學人文學科研究中心叢書 (Centre for Humanities Research: Book Publications) (Hong Kong: Lingnan daxue renwenxueke yanjiu zhongxin 嶺南大學人文學科研究中心 (Centre for Humanities Research), 2005); Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] and Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 'Xu: cong xueshu yanjiu, xueke jiaoyu dao shequ guanhuai: taolun Xianggang wenxue yu dianying de yiyi 序——從學術研究、學科教育到社區關懷：討論香港文學與電影的意義 (Preface: From Academic Research, Academic Education to Caring for the Community: Discussing the Importance of Hong Kong Literature and Film)', in *Xianggang wenxue yu dianying 香港文學與電影 (Hong Kong Literature and Cinema)*, ed. Huang Jinhui 黃勁輝, Literature and Cinema Series (Hong Kong: Open University of Hong Kong Press, 2012), i–vi.

¹⁰ Hung and Minford, 'Special Issue: Hong Kong', 8. Zhang Yuele allots three chapters of his book to three of the intellectuals, Wang Tao 王韜, Kang Youwei 康有為, and Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙, and discusses them with regard to their status as southbound literati. See Zhao Yule 趙雨樂, *Jindai nanlai wenren de Xianggang yinxiang yu guozu yishi 近代南來文人的香港印象與國族意識 (Modern Southbound Intellectuals Impression of Hong Kong and Their Nationalist Awareness)*, 1–3:9–24, 59–70, 73–88.

appearance and political and economic values. These texts centre on Hong Kong and its status as a colony, and many exhibit strong anti-colonialist sentiments that reveal the authors' personal views of China's social and cultural landscape.

4.1.1 *Tale of two cities: Shanghai and Hong Kong*

The famous director Yi Wen 易文, also known as Evan Yang (1920–1978), who left Shanghai for Hong Kong in 1949, wrote: 'even if Hong Kong is a "foreign territory", it's a much more attractive place than Shanghai due to the city's liberal atmosphere. That's why I came to Hong Kong'.¹¹ During his first stay in 1940 Yang wrote a collection of essays which he titled *Half a Year in Hong Kong (Xianggang bannian 香港半年)*, which includes detailed observations of life in the colonial city, every aspect of which he compares with Shanghai, finding Hong Kong generally inferior. Yang sums up a Mainland Chinese impression of Hong Kong: '[t]he people who came from Shanghai to Hong Kong have two kinds of feelings: first, the place is very small and second, the people are very stupid'.¹²

Despite the intellectual freedom they enjoyed, Hong Kong remained the 'peripheralized South', as Yu Liwen 余麗文 observes, and for these exiles 'the diasporic experiences of leaving home and entering a foreign territory under British rule (which was very different from Shanghai's *mélange* of imperial powers) caused a culture shock'.¹³ Due to its segregation from China's historical and traditional past, Hong Kong was conceived by the migrant Mainlanders as the 'internal other'.

The same observation applies to the Shanghai-born and well-known modern Chinese writer Zhang Ailing 張愛玲 (1920–1995), who left the Mainland

¹¹ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 'Chonghui wushi niandai nanlai wenren de suxiang: Yi Wen de wenxue yu dianying chutan 重繪五十年代南來文人的塑像：易文的文學與電影初探 (Re-Drawing the Figure of the Southbound Literati in the 50s: Pre-Exploring Yi Wen's Literature and Films)', *Xianggang wenxue 香港文學 (Hong Kong Literary)* 295 (2009): 88.

¹² Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 88.

¹³ Yu Liwen 余麗文, 'Politicizing Poetics: The (Re)Writing of the Social Imaginary in Modern and Contemporary Chinese Poetry' (doctoral dissertation, University of Hong Kong (Pokfulam, Hong Kong), 2009), 205, https://doi.org/10.5353/th_b4284162.

for Hong Kong in 1952 and stayed for three years before emigrating to the US, and who often constructed Hong Kong as the literary 'other'. For instance the short story *Aloe Ashes: First Burning* (*Chenxiang xie – diyilu xiang* 沉香屑第一爐香) (1943), published in the Shanghai journal *Violets* (*Ziluolan* 紫羅蘭), does not, says Leo Ou-fan Lee, simply illustrate an exoticized Hong Kong subjugated to the dichotomies of the West and the Orient: 'like several of Chang's other stories, [it] is more suggestive of an allegory – a story about a city that is the "other" to Chang's home city of Shanghai'. Lee asserts that Zhang needed Hong Kong for the literal literary construction of Shanghai, even if Hong Kong itself 'remained a poor copy of the fabled metropolis' as they complement each other: 'it takes the "other" to understand the self; the city of Hong Kong is also crucial to our understanding of Shanghai'.¹⁴

The Hong Kong in Zhang's stories and essays can be certainly considered culturally and intellectually inferior to Shanghai, as Zhang notes in her memoirs: '[w]e stood at the stalls eating turnip cakes fried in bubbling hot oil, while barely a meter away the discolored corpse of a pauper lay by our feet. Would winter in Shanghai be the same? At least Shanghai would not seem to tolerate such a scene so readily. Hong Kong lacks Shanghai's sense of its own cultivation'.¹⁵

To Zhang, the Hong Kong of her time, the 1940s, was under colonial rule, unlike Shanghai. Lee asserts that what Zhang refers to as Shanghai's 'cultivation' (*hanyang* 涵養) is actually 'the cultural sophistication of a person who has the elegant appearance of self-restraint'.¹⁶ According to Lee, Hong Kong and its 'commercial and cultural elite' underwent a process of 'Shanghaization' in the 1950s, following the first stream of 'southern movement' from 1938 to 1941, when it was obvious to the refugees that colonial Hong Kong was 'no longer a city to visit or to take a vacation, but a place to stay'.¹⁷

¹⁴ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 330.

¹⁵ The English translation is taken from Ailing Zhang, Andrew F. Jones, and Nicole Huang, *Written on Water*, Weatherhead Books on Asia (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 46.

¹⁶ Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, 327.

¹⁷ Lee, 330.

4.1.2 *The backward other*

A common impression shared by many Mainland Chinese literati was the otherness of the colonial city in terms of language, customs, weather, landscape, and food. For many Mainland Chinese coming from northern China, Cantonese is as foreign to them as any other Western language. Hong Kong was perceived and identified as the backward other, foreign and unintelligible, due first to its domination by colonial foreign power and second to its location in the South. This perception led to the view that Hong Kong was not genuinely Chinese, as it lacked the 'Chinese spirit', as evidenced by the people's spoiled and materialistic way of life, and had 'lost its Chinese soul' under British colonial rule.¹⁸

Wang Tao 王韜 (1828–1897), a Chinese scholar and translator who fled to Hong Kong after the outbreak of the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), commented on the locals, who seemed 'rather stupid and [spoke] a dialect that is quite unintelligible'. Wang noticed the government's devoted but futile attempt to extend the area of this little island due to the lack of space for its inhabitants: '[t]heir persistence reminds one of the mythical bird (*jingwei* 精衛) that endeavoured to fill up the sea with pebbles, and the "foolish old man" who tried to move mountains'. In his opinion the inhabitants were spoiled and knew only how to strive for luxury.¹⁹

The accomplished classical Chinese scholar and prominent political thinker Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927) travelled to Hong Kong in the early 1880s. He put his thoughts about Hong Kong and Macao, which had been administered by the Portuguese Empire since the mid-sixteenth century, into a short poem:

Hong Kong – what a picture of desolation!
Macao – how like a landscape at dusk!
You ask: 'What did you see, sir, in those places?'

¹⁸ Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 114.

¹⁹ The English translation is taken from Wang Tao 王韜, 'Xianghai ji zong 香海羈踪 (My sojourn in Hong Kong: Excerpts)', trans. Yang Qinghua, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 37–39.

‘Bizarre circuses and barbaric costumes’.²⁰

Tao Fen 韜奮 (1895–1944), an editor and publisher from Fuzhou 福州 who travelled to Europe in the summer of 1933, also noted his impressions in a series of essays entitled *Track of Duckweed: My Travel Notes* 萍踪寄語 (*Pingzong jiyu*). He noticed the people’s different dress styles: the lack of men wearing Western suits with the majority wearing Cantonese-style suits and the women wearing Cantonese-style blouses and wide trousers. During his tram ride to the Peak, Tao Fen also paid attention to the colonial cityscape, which he saw as an ‘extraordinary thing about Hong Kong’ due to the predominance of buildings ‘built in the European style, with three to five storeys’ and the ‘absence of even a single Chinese-style building’. Apart from the buildings he observed rich people inhabiting the ‘mansions and villas’ on the Peak whereas the homeless poor lined the sidewalks. However, Tao Fen expresses admiration and praise of Hong Kong and closes his essay with a brief description and an exclamation of astonishment: ‘Hong Kong island occupies a total area of about thirty square miles. It has been a colony of the British empire for ninety years. It has a population of 850,000, of which 800,000 are Chinese and 14,000 British. Just imagine, 14,000 British ruling 800,000 Chinese!’²¹

4.1.3 *The May-Fourth literati and Hong Kong’s structured world*

For the May Fourth intellectuals, Hong Kong served as a counter-image of China in which British powers implemented structure and order, whereas the Chinese feudal society on the Mainland was not able to keep up with the Western progress-oriented way of thinking in colonial Hong Kong. Hong Kong stood for the modern and progressive values that China lacked and needed to strive for to restore order to its chaotic, weak and corruptive society.

²⁰ The English translation is taken from Kang Youwei 康有為, ‘Shi yishou 詩一首 (Hong Kong and Macao)’, trans. T. C. Lai, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 64.

²¹ The English translation is taken from Tao Fen 韜奮, ‘Dao Xianggang yihou 到香港以後 (In Hong Kong: Excerpts)’, trans. Zhu Zhiyu, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 56–58.

The impression of Hong Kong described by the founding father of the Republic of China, Sun-Yatsen 孫中山 (1866–1925), provides such an example. He praised Hong Kong's order and well-managed progressiveness in a passionate speech to the students of Hong Kong University in 1923. Starting from the point where he referred to Hong Kong and Hong Kong University as his intellectual birthplace that had borne many modern and revolutionary ideas, he described the colony as orderly and calm, unlike China 'where corruption among officials was the rule' and not the exception. Sun was highly impressed, first by the orderly tranquillity in which artistic work could be done without interruption, and second by the merits of the colonial administration: '[a]lthough [Xiangshan and Hong Kong] are only fifty miles apart, the differences impressed me so much that I began to wonder why it was that foreigners have done such marvellous things with this barren rock in only seventy or eighty years, whilst China, with several thousand years of civilization, has not even one place like Hong Kong'.²²

The famous left-wing writer and leading figure in the May Fourth Movement, Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936), was less impressed. His feelings about Hong Kong were rather vague; drawing on two news items that he stumbled upon, he wondered whether it was a safe place, recalling an incident that had seemed to prove the supremacy of the British over the locals. A Chinese person committed a theft, in fact a trivial matter, and the British magistrate ordered that he should be whipped. Lu Xun concludes: '[t]he Chinese are still being whipped in Hong Kong'. He also noticed that the colonial rulers would not tolerate the Chinese adopting their customs because 'the language and dress belong only to the master race'. He was sceptical about the British government's efforts to promote and revitalize Chinese culture, going so far as to proclaim that he had saved the speech of Governor [Cecil Clementi] stating that 'Chinese culture had to be revitalized' and that this would become 'an important chapter in some

²² The English translation is taken from Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙, 'Guofu Sun Zhongshan xiansheng sheng yu Xianggang daxue yanjiang zhi jiang 國父孫中山先生於香港大學演講之講 (Address to the Students of Hong Kong University)', *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 42–44.

future *History of the Revitalization of Chinese Studies*'.²³ In another incident Lu Xun travelled to Hong Kong by boat in 1927 and witnessed how customs officers, whom he called 'Chinese compatriots' employed by the British, examined each piece of every passenger's luggage. Lu Xun had heard stories about how these officials cursed and beat people and demanded a few dollars from them, and was curious to see how his 'compatriots behaved under the British flag'. He was annoyed seeing these officers going through all his cases of books, but in the end he was able to bribe them with money and the officers withdrew. To Lu Xun, the foreigners had the upper hand, whereas 'the rest are "natives" who suffer in silence'. He comes to the conclusion, while also implying the impending supremacy of foreign powers over China, that 'though Hongkong is just one island, it gives a true picture of many parts of China today and in times to come'.²⁴

4.1.4 *The captivating landscape of Hong Kong*

There were literati who focused on the beauty of Hong Kong. They did not voice any critical concerns, although they kept a certain distance from the city as if they did not want to immerse themselves in a pejorative and critical Mainland Chinese perspective.

In *Travel Notes* (1934) (*Lutu suibi* 旅途隨筆), the Chengdu-born writer Ba Jin 巴金 (1904–2005) expresses his view in the essay *Hong Kong Nights* (*Xianggang zhi ye* 香港之夜) when he passed through it on a steamer from Shanghai to Guangzhou in 1933. The night scene he describes is somehow dreamy, fantastic and rather romantic, owing to his staying on the ship with no contact with the locals, giving his visit a remote and less sceptical point of view. Ba Jin was very much focused on the sight during the night: 'Hong Kong itself was an endless panorama of stars'. He was impressed by Hong Kong's lights: '[t]here were lights on the mountains, on the streets, and on the buildings ... The night

²³ The English translation is taken from Lu Xun 魯迅, 'Lüetan Xianggang 略談香港 (On Hong Kong)', trans. Ziyu Zhi and Don J. Cohn, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 47–53 (italics in original).

²⁴ Lu Xun 魯迅, 'Hongkong Again', in *Selected Works of Lu Hsun*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1956), 340–48.

was still and soft ... Yet when I gazed upon the scintillating mountain of stars, I could hear the lights whispering to each other. The rocking of the boat created the illusion that all the lights were moving'.²⁵

At the beginning of the 1930s the literary historian and major public intellectual figure in Republican China, Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), was invited by the Vice Chancellor of Hong Kong to give a lecture at Hong Kong University. Hu Shi boarded a ship and headed south. The city left a strong and positive impression on him and, like Ba Jin 巴金, he admired and praised Hong Kong's outstanding beauty. He was inclined to compare the city with other places he had visited; for instance 'from [the Mid-Levels on Hong Kong island, where he was staying], the bay and the islands near and far looked more magnificent than similar vistas in Qingdao and Dalian'. He mentions the stunning night scenery from the Peak: '[f]rom there, we could see the lights of the entire city, a night view even more magnificent than that of New York or San Francisco'. During a lecture he condemned the locals' ignorance of Hong Kong's beauty because 'they had become so accustomed to the place that they had grown tired of it, and looked upon Hong Kong as a market where they do business and earn their keep'. He suggested that 'Hong Kong should have its own poets and artists to eulogize its fine natural setting'.²⁶

4.1.5 Nationalism: The 'stray' and the 'lost' child

A recurring motif in the literary texts of Chinese writers and intellectuals is the image of mother and child that embodies the connection between Mainland China and Hong Kong. Strong nationalist feeling assumes the appearance of a mother (country) who will not abandon her child (Hong Kong) and will always love it: even though the child had been, so to speak, kidnapped by 'Western demons', it was not considered completely lost.

²⁵ The English translation is taken from Ba Jin 巴金, 'Xianggang zhi ye 香港之夜 (Hong Kong Nights)', trans. Zhiyu Zhu and Don J. Cohn, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 54–55.

²⁶ The English translation is taken from Hu Shi 胡適, 'Xianggang 香港 (Hong Kong: Excerpts)', trans. Zhiyu Zhu, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 54–55.

Ai Wu 艾蕪 (1904–2005), a leftist writer who travelled through Southeast Asia in 1925–1930 and lived in Burma for several years, draws on his brief incarceration in Victoria Prison in his reflections. He was very enthusiastic about visiting, as Ai Wu states, his ‘long-dreamed-of Hong Kong’, comparing ‘China to a loving mother and Hong Kong to her young daughter’, showing his strong patriotic and nationalist feeling for his mother country, although he could hardly ‘resist the temptation to see this gorgeous young lady’. Although Ai Wu’s enthusiasm did not spare him from receiving what he called sarcastically ‘special treatment from the English imperialists’, staying one night in a ‘government courtesy hotel’, Victoria Prison, for inspection purpose. In the end, leaving Hong Kong with ‘anger and sadness’, his inevitable conclusion was: ‘[t]he deepest impression I am left with of Hong Kong is the cruelty of imperialism and the unbearable stink of the night-bucket!’²⁷

Hong Kong is also often compared to a ‘stray child’ who needs to return to ‘Mother China’. For instance this image appears in a poem on Hong Kong by one of China’s leading poets of the May Fourth era, Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899–1946). The famous poem ‘Song for the Seven Children’ (1925) (*Qizi zhige* 七子之歌), is divided into seven parts, each dedicated to a territory lost to a foreign sovereign: Hong Kong, Kowloon, Macao, Taiwan, Canton Bay, Weihaiwei, and Lushun/Dalian. It was written when the Qing government was weak and China was fragmented by partial colonization. The poem expresses the feelings of the Mainland Chinese intellectuals and was written to remind the population of the imperialists’ domination and to spur Chinese national consciousness and patriotic feelings about a revival of China.

香港
 我好比鳳閣階前守夜的黃豹，
 母親呀，我身分雖微，地位險要。
 如今獍惡的海獅撲在我身上，
 啖著我的骨肉，暖著我的脂膏；
 母親呀，我哭泣號啕，呼你不應。

²⁷ The English translation is taken from Ai Wu 艾蕪, ‘Xianggang de yi ye 香港的一夜 (One Night in Hong Kong)’, trans. Zhiyu Zhu, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 59–62.

母親呀，快讓我躲入你的懷抱！
母親！我要回來，母親！

‘Hong Kong’

Like the yellow panther guarding the gates of the imperial palace
Oh, Mother! My post is a strategic one, yet my status so humble.
The ferocious Sea Lion presses upon my body,
Devouring my flesh and bones and warming itself on my blood.
Oh, Mother! I wail and cry, yet you hear me not.
Oh, Mother! Quick! Let me hide in your embrace!
Mother! I want to come back, Mother!

—Wen Yiduo, 1988²⁸

These nationalistic and patriotic sentiments were shared by many Chinese intellectuals, as they considered Hong Kong a geographically, racially and culturally part of China. To them, while it was under the regime of the British administration, its colonial status was only temporary, and Hong Kong would always remain a part of China, depending on China, as in a mother-child relationship, to nurture it spiritually and physically. For this reason Hong Kong’s residents were all considered Chinese nationals by the majority of Chinese literati. Additionally, Hong Kong and the Mainland were regarded as a unity that could not be separated or severed. The second part of the poem dedicated to Kowloon goes as follows:

While big brother Hong Kong tells of his sufferings
Mother, have you forgotten your little daughter Kowloon?
Since I married that Demon King who rules the sea,
I’ve been tossed upon endless waves of tears
Mother, I count the days until our joyous reunion
Yet fear my hope is only a dream.
Mother! I want to come back, Mother!

—Wen Yiduo, 1988²⁹

²⁸ The English translation is taken from Wen Yiduo 聞一多, ‘Hong Kong’, trans. Zhiyu Zhu, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 65.

²⁹ The English translation is taken from Wen Yiduo 聞一多, ‘Kowloon’, trans. Zhiyu Zhu, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 66.

In the poem Kowloon is married to the Demon King, the British government, showing the strong belief that Hong Kong and Kowloon, both under the colonial regime, are waiting to rid themselves of the demon for a joyous reunion with China.

4.1.6 *Cultural nationalism: Shanghai and Hong Kong*

The cities of Shanghai and Hong Kong, and the supremacy of the former over the latter, form another recurring image in these writings. The following passage discusses the adapted play *Jasmin's* exaggerated and parodistic image of Hong Kong and its relationship with Mainland China and its inclusion of certain common cultural biases of the 1940s.

In the mid-1980s the Hong Kong poet, writer, and scholar Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] (1949–2013) was asked by the Seals Theatre Company Foundation to write a stage adaptation of Zhang Ailing's 張愛玲 short story *Jasmine Tea* (1943). In his introduction to the play, *Jasmin*, Liang points out that the focus is on the complex and complicated interactions between the Mainland Chinese and the people of Hong Kong: 'partly because even in the 1980s, certain tensions and barriers still existed between two groups'. He mentions that during the 1930s and 1940s many Chinese writers who sought refuge in Hong Kong recorded their impressions of the place in their notes and essays. Liang is aware that due to the 'cultural differences, these impressions were not free of prejudice. There was little in the way of in-depth study and analysis, but much subjective denigration and reproof, often the result of misunderstanding'. Zhang Ailing's original plot begins with a narrative frame in which the narrator lights the incense and prepares a pot of jasmine tea as he starts to tell the Shanghainese listener about Hong Kong. In his adaptation Liang removes this frame, as it was to be staged for a Hong Kong audience and had to, as Liang says, 'accommodate a Hong Kong perspective'. With the fact that 'these different images and voices, juxtaposed, would clash, complement, harmonize with and even contradict one another' in mind, Liang uses a collage approach to combine further material and works by Zhang Ailing and other writers of the 1940s. He changes the origins of

Jasmine's two protagonists, which in the original are both from Shanghai; in Liang's adaption the male protagonist is born in Shanghai whereas the female protagonist grows up in Hong Kong. This significant change, says Liang, was made chiefly 'to highlight the effect different cultural environments have on them'.

The play *Jasmin* consists of four scenes; the plot is about two university students, Nie Chuanqing and Yan Danzhu, who are classmates and become friends over the course of the story. The two draw closer until Nie, the male protagonist, confesses his love for Yan in the second-to-last scene, which marks the climax of the plot: '[y]ou are more than just a lover, you're like a father, a mother, a home, an entirely new environment, an ideal country. There is only you in my life – past, present, and to come. You are like an all-knowing, all-powerful god'.³⁰ After this confession Nie turns him down and lets him know that she can never be the person he expects her to be. Yan feels rejected and goes wild, offending and even attacking her before he withdraws. The play is about not only the relationship between Nie and Yan but also that between Nie and his role model, Yan's father, who is a professor of Chinese Literature whose class he is attending. Nie feels deep admiration for Yan's father as a scholar and a teacher and is convinced that his talent is wasted in Hong Kong: 'for a man like your father, life in Hong Kong must be an agony'.³¹ Nie's family is originally from Shanghai; they did not come to Hong Kong by choice. Nie states: 'I wouldn't have come to Hong Kong if the Japanese hadn't taken Shanghai. I can't get use to this place ... people here don't care about the Chinese at all'.³² Nie feels trapped, and like many other Chinese refugees cannot adjust to life in the British colony easily. He projects his own agony onto Professor Yan. Nie's own father, an opium-addicted, choleric and abusive patriarch, serves as a contrasting foil to Professor Yan. Nie has a low opinion of his father and their relationship seems difficult. He usually obeys his father, but does not see him as a role model: 'I don't look like my father, do I? Tell me that I won't turn out like him. I don't look like him. I look like

³⁰ The English translation is taken from Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Xiangpian 香片 (Jasmin)', trans. Jane Lai, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 250.

³¹ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 238.

³² Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 237.

somebody else ... someone better'.³³ The father insults Nie whenever he gets the opportunity ('sneaky bastard'),³⁴ but in spite of all their differences they share the same strong opinion of Hong Kong.

In the play, Nie and his father express their frustration and resentment about life in Hong Kong. In terms of images of and bias against Hong Kong the following three statements stand out prominently during the course of the play: first, in the opening scene as Nie and Yan exchange their feelings about living in the colony Nie expresses his frustration, saying 'Hong Kong is a cultural desert', an expression that was and is still common today. However this does not sound as if it genuinely comes from Nie, but more like something he has heard: '[t]here is no culture in a place like this [as if quoting something]. Hong Kong is such a cultural desert! [passionately moved] And people in Hong Kong wallow in dreams and luxury. When we got here from Shanghai, when we docked, when we saw the neon lights, I know this was a place of decadence and debauchery'.³⁵ Nie's father mocks Hong Kong's inferiority, particularly the barbecued pork (*chashao*) 叉燒, a Hong Kong speciality: '[n]ow, Shanghai is different! Even grocery store boys recognize smoked fish when they see it. The Cantonese don't even know what it is. You've got to hand it to the Shanghainese. The Cantonese don't know anything. Bloody Cantonese! Don't even know how to cook pork. They just bloody burn it'.³⁶ Lastly, Nie's father complains about the people's greed and that they are nothing but consumption-orientated: 'Hong Kong people think only about your money. When they make friends with you, it's just because they're after your money'. Furthermore, 'if it weren't for the wretched political situation, who'd come to a wretched place like Hong Kong? ... What's so marvellous about Hong Kong? It's not as if it's got lots of skyscrapers. It's best not to go out at all unless you have to, you'll only get diddled'.³⁷ Therefore when Nie tries in the story to adapt a play based on a short Chinese novel in which a young man from the Mainland falls in

³³ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 246.

³⁴ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 243.

³⁵ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 238 (brackets in original).

³⁶ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 242.

³⁷ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 245.

love with a Hong Kong girl, the following line summarizes the feeling that Nie and his father both share about Hong Kong: 'I have never loved you. I loved you because you were the embodiment of the shadow of the motherland'.³⁸

This kind of strong cultural nationalistic viewpoint is addressed by Wing Sang Law in his chapter 'Chinese Cultural Nationalism' in the book *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese*. Wing notes that most memoirs that contain impressions of Hong Kong are written by Chinese Mainland writers from Shanghai. He points out that from a Shanghainese perspective, Hong Kong is not just a colony fully ceded to the British, unlike Shanghai which could be considered semi-colonial; it is a 'subordinated place, completely devoid of culture'.³⁹ More interestingly, this 'semi-colonized Chinese Mainland's urban literati-cum-intellectual stratum' is located between two differently-scaled colonized settings in which they need to find their own distinct position: '[t]hey did not know about their own marginality. On the one hand, they identified themselves with the colonial rule in Shanghai and were proud of the prosperity and powerful status this colonial rule had brought to them. On the other hand, they criticized Hong Kong's colonial rule. As a matter of fact, they had forgotten their own position'.⁴⁰ This cultural antagonism leads to a transformation of status, i.e. 'a perverse status logic of a colonizer' that has been 'integral to the formation of contemporary Chinese nationalism'.⁴¹ Against the backdrop of Hong Kong's status gradually becoming the 'Chinese nationalists' internal other', i.e. 'backward, vulgar, and colonized', the Chinese migrant intellectuals developed, according to Zheng, an 'inland-centrism' (*Zhong yuan hua* 中原化) in which Hong Kong was seen as another cultural centre for China.⁴²

³⁸ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 241f.

³⁹ Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 116.

⁴⁰ Wong Wang-chi 王宏志, Li Xiaoliang 李小良, and Chen Qingqiao 陳清僑, *Fouxiang Xianggang: li shi, wenhua, weilai* 否想香港: 歷史, 文化, 未來 (*Hong Kong Un-imagined: History, Culture, Future*) (Taipei: Maidian chuban gufen youxian gongsi 麥田出版股份有限公司 (Rye Field Publshing Company), 1997). Quoted and translated from Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 116.

⁴¹ Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 116.

⁴² Leo Ou-fan Lee, 'Xianggang wenhua de "bianyuanxing" chutan 香港文化的"邊緣性"初探 (A Preliminary Exploration of the "Marginality" of Hong Kong Culture)', *Jintian* 今天 (*Today*) 28, no. 1 (Spring) (1995): 75–80; Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai

4.2 Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s

Hong Kong's literature of the 1950s is influenced by the many social, political and cultural changes happening in Mainland China. Following the establishment of the PRC in 1949, which is considered a turning point by many literary scholars, the US 'greenback culture' in Hong Kong's cultural landscape reinforced the political left-right divide among the Hong Kong literati in the Cold War setting. Hence due to the socio-political circumstances the literary landscape in 1950s Hong Kong was largely dominated by Chinese migrant literati who had left China around the time of the establishment of the PRC in 1949, mostly by choice, relocating themselves at what was considered 'China's cultural margin'. These migrant intellectuals, including those known as the southbound literati or southbound writers (*nanlai wenren/ nanlai zuojia* 南來文人/南來作家), not only suffered from cultural displacement but were also forced to take underpaid jobs to make a living.⁴³ They faced financial problems and struggled to build a new life for themselves in the colony. Liu Yichang (b. 1918) wrote about these migrants:

Hong Kong literature in the early fifties, to a certain extent, shows signs of struggle. While a large amount of intellectuals had left Hong Kong for the mainland, another group of intellectuals have come to Hong Kong from China seeking an old way of life. Most of these newcomers cannot gather themselves up to tackle new difficulties, their life is very hard, they feel void and are lost, and they suffer extremely from the spiritual depression of life.⁴⁴

Imbued with a strong sense of continuity and 'Chinese modernity', these writers sought to write and rewrite China's literary history since the time of the May

Chee], and Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], eds., *Zaoqi Xianggang xin wenxue zuopin xuan* 早期香港新文學作品選 1927–1941 (*Collection of Works of the Early Hong Kong New Literature 1927–1941*), 1st ed. (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu 天地圖書 (Cosmos Books), 1998), 21–32.

⁴³ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, ed., *Xianggang duanpian xiaoshuo: wushi niandai* 香港短篇小說選:五十年代 (Selection of Hong Kong Short Stories: The 1950s) (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu youxian gongsi 天地圖書有限公司 (Cosmos Book Ltd), 2002), 3.

⁴⁴ Luo Guixiang 羅貴祥 [Lo Kwai-cheung], 'Liu Yichang yu ziben zhuyi de zhijian xing 劉以鬯與資本主義的時間性 (Liu Yichang and the Temporalities of Capitalism)', *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese* 10, no. 1 (2010): 164.

Fourth Movement in 1919.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the generation of the 1950s initiated the development of an ‘alternative, more inclusive kind of Chinese ethics and culture’⁴⁶ which did not suffer from ruptures and demolition, including those of the yet-to-come Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) to which Chinese culture was exposed during an epoch of continuous warfare and political upheaval on the Mainland.

This chapter first presents an overview of the literary field and publishing culture of the 1950s, taking the historical watershed of 1949 as its point of departure. It shows the emergence of a unique cultural sphere on the one hand, and the geopolitical tension of the Cold War, which impacted on Hong Kong’s literary sectors due to the left- and right-camp funding, on the other. This is followed by a discussion of the Hong Kong migrant literature (*nanmin wenxue*) 難民文學 genre of the 1950s. The final section examines the complexity of Hong Kong literature and its various influences (the May Fourth tradition, modern and Western literature) throughout the course of the colony’s literary history.

4.2.1 *The year 1949 as turning point in Hong Kong literature*

In Hong Kong literary studies 1949 is considered a turning point that had a significant impact on Hong Kong literature which lasted for many decades.⁴⁷ It marks the end of the long-standing civil wars in China and the founding of the People’s Republic of China, which brought about a shift in the left and right

⁴⁵ Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, ‘Xianggang wenxue duiyu “zhongxie” ershi shiji Zhongguo wenxue shi de yiyi 香港文學對於“重寫”二十世紀中國文學史的意義 (The Significance of Hong Kong Literature in the “Re-Writing” of Chinese Literary History in the Twentieth Century)’, *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese: Special Issue: The Identity, Issues and Development of Hong Kong Literature* 8, no. 2 (2008): 53. According to Bonnie S. McDougall, Hong Kong is still a marginal place, and ‘as such, its primary significance is in providing a successful model of an alternative Chinese modernity’. Furthermore, ‘it is less well known that Hong Kong, like Taiwan, also presents alternative visions of Chinese traditions’. See Bonnie S. McDougall, ‘Diversity as Value: Marginality, Post-Colonialism and Modernity in Modern Chinese Literature’, in *Belief, History, and the Individual in Modern Chinese Literary Culture*, ed. Artur K. Wardega (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 142f.

⁴⁶ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] 2009, 4.

⁴⁷ See for instance David Der-wei Wang 王德威, Chen Sihe 陳思和, and Xu Zidong 許子東, eds., *Yijiusijiu yihou 一九四九以後 (After 1949)* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2010).

powers in Hong Kong. In addition to these political changes, with the Cold War colonial Hong Kong became a particular focus for American intervention in Southeast Asia. All these factors and more contributed to the change in Hong Kong's political and cultural landscape. First, the US greenback culture left its mark on literature and film, as it controlled the institutions receiving US financial aid. Second, the migrant influx happened not just in one direction but was rather a two-way-movement towards the north (Mainland China) and south (Hong Kong) subject to China's geopolitical stability, changing the political landscape by bringing about a distinctive political shift from left to right in Hong Kong when left-wing intellectuals left for the Mainland after 1949, leaving right-wing intellectuals to dominate Hong Kong's literary and films circles. Lastly, many right-wing intellectuals left the PRC and chose Hong Kong's relative artistic freedom from political restrictions, where they were able to create a liberal cultural niche for themselves.

In many ways 1949 was not only a watershed in Hong Kong literature; it is a common belief in Chinese Literature Studies that 1949 separated modern from contemporary Chinese literature, although there is dissent on this: for instance literary scholars such as C. T. Hsia, David Der-wei Wang and Xiaojue Wang propose looking beyond this 'break' and argue against the 1949 divide.⁴⁸

However, for Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, 1949 is the dividing line between modern and contemporary Chinese literature. Hong Kong was less affected by political and historical ruptures and therefore provided a space in which modern Chinese literature could develop. In his opinion various traditions of modern Chinese literature were declining (in his words, 'withering') until it disappeared entirely due to post-war political circumstances on the Mainland, similar to the effect of the May Fourth literary revolution on traditional Chinese literature. It caused a hiatus and set a new literary period in motion. For Huang, Hong Kong provided a setting in which literature did not suffer from any historical rupture

⁴⁸ Chih-Tsing Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 3rd ed. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2016); Pang-yuan Chi and David Der-wei Wang, eds., *Chinese Literature in the Second Half of a Modern Century: A Critical Survey* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Wang, *Modernity with a Cold War Face*.

and is therefore more suited to tracing traditional Chinese literature: '[h]owever, when analysing the New Literature from "May Fourth" it reveals the multiple roots [of] its emergence and development and also, that all post-1949 Chinese literature is rooted in tradition. The first thing people sense in Hong Kong's literature is a historical pulse. [post-war Hong Kong] contributed to the survival and the development of modern Chinese literature by providing a more inclusive space'.⁴⁹

Literary scholars have also emphasized how the geographical link between Hong Kong and Mainland China shifted after 1949. For instance Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞 points out that both 'are practically connected geographically, although the change of the Mainland's flag in 1949 brought a major change into the relationship between Hong Kong and the Mainland. As a result, both the political seclusion and the geographical connection built a foundation for the relationship between these two places'.⁵⁰

In this context the migrant flows in opposite directions from 1949 onwards might have played a pivotal role in the shift in the relationship between Hong Kong and China since, as Huang Weiliang 黃維樑 notes, 'many writers in Hong Kong returned to the Mainland, while a great number of literati on the Mainland headed south to Hong Kong'. Huang calls this the north-south-convection-phenomenon (*nanbei duiliu de xianxiang* 南北對流的現象).⁵¹ Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 describes a similar political shift, observing the change in the political climate in Hong Kong in the late 1940s: 'due to the Communist Party's continuing success on the Mainland, the [leftist] tendency started to change after

⁴⁹ Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, 'Kuayue 1949: Liu Yichang he Xianggang wenxue 跨越 1949: 劉以鬯和香港文學 (To Transcend 1949: Liu Yichang and Hong Kong Literature)', in *劉以鬯與香港現代主義 Liu Yichang yu Xianggang xiandai zhuyi (Liu Yichang and Hong Kong Modernism)*, ed. Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] and Huang Jinhui 黃勁輝, 'Wenxue yu dianying' congshu 「文學與電影」叢書 (Literature and Cinema Series) (Hong Kong: Open University of Hong Kong Press, 2010), 16.

⁵⁰ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代的香港小說 (Hong Kong Novels in the 1950s)', *Xianggang zuojiabao 香港作家報 (Hong Kong Writers)* 14, no. 3 (1996): n.p.

⁵¹ Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, 'Xianggang wenxue de fazhan 香港文學的發展 (The Development of Hong Kong Literature)', *Review of Modern Literature in Chinese* 2 (1994): 92.

1949. Left-wing cultural workers gradually returned to the north and took part in the establishment of the PRC ... while at the same time one right-wing writer after another headed south'. In Hong Kong the political shift stemmed from the fact that intellectuals who were mainly left-wing and 'anti-Guomindang' (Nationalist Party), 'anti-Imperial', and 'anti-Colonial' returned to the Mainland (*fanbei*) 返北 to participate in the Communist takeover in 1949.⁵²

Hong Kong's unique geopolitical situation after 1949 gave scholars the opportunity for analysis and comparison with other, similar cities. In his article 'Hong Kong Novels in the 1950s', Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞 compares Hong Kong with Taiwan in terms of their 'somewhat communist-free status', although Hong Kong's liberal setting was more like that of Shanghai during the time of its foreign concessions at the end of the 1930s. 'Entering the 1950s, Hong Kong and Taiwan were still maintaining a close political relationship, but it was difficult to develop a stronger connection due to their anti-communist positions and the geographical isolation between these two islands'.⁵³ He points out that Hong Kong was predestined to become more independent than elsewhere in Asia at the time, and this created the basis for the emergence of a singular type of literature comparable to that of Shanghai's 'Lone Island' period's flourishing and quite liberal literature and cultural scene. In the context of the short duration of Shanghai's 'Lone Island' situation, Michelle Yeh describes how 'during those four years, the foreign concessions – mainly French and British – provided fertile ground for literary activities. Paradoxically, the geopolitical situation gave the city a greater degree of freedom than either the GMD [Kuomintang]-ruled interior or the CCP-controlled border regions'.⁵⁴ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞 observes a similar

⁵² Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], 'Yiwang de lishi, lishi de yiwang. Wu liushi niandai de Xianggang wenxue 遺忘的歷史，歷史的遺忘——五，六十年代的香港文學 (Forgetting History and the History of Forgetting: Hong Kong's Literature in the 50s and 60s)', *Suye wenxue 素葉文學 (Plain Leaves Literature)* 61, no. 36 (1996): 30.

⁵³ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代的香港小說 (Hong Kong Novels in the 1950s)'.

⁵⁴ Michelle Yeh, 'Shanghai the Lone Island', in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, ed. Gangyi Sun Zhang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 584. GMD is an acronym for Guomindang, also known as Kuomintang (KMT).

effect due to the British government's policy of non-interference: '[i]n addition to Britain as the sole colonial sovereign, Hong Kong has become more independent on China's territory. When Hong Kong was turning more and more into a lone island, its literature became, like Shanghai's during the Second Sino-Japanese War, another "lone island literature" (*gudao wenxue* 孤島文學). It was the influence of this geopolitical environment that helped the development of Hong Kong novels to follow its own unique logic'.⁵⁵

Apart from its unique geopolitical status, Hong Kong in 1949 was the intersection at which two different literary traditions converged. The temporal and spatial entanglement between the Mainland and Hong Kong explains the connecting link between the modern Chinese literary tradition and Hong Kong literature. And after 1949, the turning point at which political events interrupted the course of both China and Hong Kong's literary histories, as Huang Wanhua 黃萬華 observes, these two types of literature coexisted throughout the 1950s:

To trace and explore the former retrospectively in the coexistence of these two literary forces, has made Hong Kong play a role that connected the history before and after 1949, but it was also inevitable to find it caught in the complex tangle of fierce left-right opposition. Also, its [the tangle's] remaining or departing depended upon whether the southbound writers were heading north or going south.⁵⁶

The scholar Huang Fanghua 黃方華 also makes a connection between the literary tradition on the Mainland and Hong Kong's development in the 1950s. He argues that Hong Kong's political, cultural and day-to-day consumer environment was most suitable for the growth of modern Chinese literature, and that it was one of only a few Chinese cities able to facilitate its full and long-term development.⁵⁷ For these reasons Zhao Xifang 趙稀方 speaks of a 'third space' which emerged

⁵⁵ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代的香港小說 (Hong Kong Novels in the 1950s)'.

⁵⁶ Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, 'Kuayue 1949: Liu Yichang he Xianggang wenxue 跨越 1949: 劉以鬯和香港文學 (To Transcend 1949: Liu Yichang and Hong Kong Literature)', 17.

⁵⁷ Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, 'Zhanhou Xianggang xiaoshuo: chaoyue zhengzhizhuhua he shangpinhua de bendihua jincheng 戰後香港小說: 超越政治化和商品化的本地化進程 (Post-War Hong Kong Novels: Transgressing the Localization Process of Politicization and Commercialization)', 159.

from post-1949 Hong Kong literature and provided the basic structure with which modern Chinese literature carried on to exist, along with mainstream left-wing literature on the Mainland and right-wing literature in Taiwan.⁵⁸

4.2.2 *Exile/Migrant Literature*

Due to the large and steady influx of migrant intellectuals, migrant's writings became a solid pillar of Hong Kong's 1950s and 1960s literature. The southbound literati were by definition refugees or migrants who produced, among other works, fictitious migrant narratives. Although Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲 and Lin Manshu 林曼叔 both make a distinction between 'refugee literature' (*nanmin wenxue* 難民文學) and 'migrant literature' (*yimin wenxue* 移民文學), Lin admits that most scholars define a work's literary form according to its theme and content: 'Well, we might as well call it 'refugee literature' if it is a work that describes refugees'.⁵⁹ For Huang, the two terms describe different mindsets, but nonetheless Huang and Lin start from the shared premise that one departs from a place and resettles in a new one. The difference between the refugee and the migrant can be distinguished according to his or her decision to stay and become part of the local community or not. According to Huang, '[b]eing a refugee is an attitude that you adopt when moving from a certain place to another but are unable to identify yourself with that new place. So you adopt the psychology of a temporary resident or a visitor'. The status of a migrant is clearly more permanent and implies long-term residency: '[b]eing a migrant is sort of an essence that you develop when moving from one particular place to another, but

⁵⁸ Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, 'Zhongguo xiandai wenxue de "haiwai" yanxu: lengzhan jiegou xia de Xianggang wenxue 中國現代文學的“海外”延續——冷戰結構下的香港文學 (The Overseas Extension of Modern Chinese Literature: Hong Kong Literature in the Cold War Period)', *Beifang luncong* 北方論叢 (*The Northern Forum*) 1 (2018): 25. At this point the 'third space' does not refer to Homi Bhabha's hybrid space in which cultural syncretisation takes place. In Zhao's view, Hong Kong provided modern Chinese literature with a space to continue and develop outside Mainland China where it was not subject to rupture and destruction caused by continuous political upheaval.

⁵⁹ Lin Manshu 林曼叔, 'Xianggang nanmin wenxue "banxialiu shehui" 香港難民文學「半下流社會」 (Hong Kong's Migrant Literature: *Halfway-Down Society*)', *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 (*Hong Kong Literature Study*) 3 (2009): 142.

then you settle at the new place and start to make long-term plans. Certainly this change of environment evokes a psychology of transformation'.⁶⁰ Literary scholars have pointed out that these refugees played a significant role on the literary scene in the first two decades following the foundation of the PRC, since Hong Kong was at that time 'a society consisting mainly of migrants and refugees' (*Yige yimin huo nanmin de shehui* 一個移民、或難民的社會): 'the literature that migrated from Mainland China to Hong Kong in the 1950s and 1960s was simply refugee literature'. It was not until the 1970s that a new generation of writers emerged to whom the production of Hong Kong literature can be ascribed.⁶¹ The reason is that literature at the time was exposed to Chinese influences from the Mainland, and due to the local writers' marginal position, genuine local Hong Kong literature had not yet emerged. 'Hong Kong's literary circles in the fifties were ruled by refugee writers who went South just at the break of dawn before Hong Kong was falling into the hands of the enemy. Three or four years later, after recovery, local Hong Kong writers had only a supporting position'.⁶² Besides, the refugees who arrived in Hong Kong after 1949 were mostly right-wing, while those there prior to 1949 were mainly left-wing and pro-Communist; the new arrivals differed from those of previous decades in that they lacked the support of any kind of organization, were impoverished and did not consider Hong Kong their home, and '[t]hey always looked northwards and missed the old days. Their ideology and behaviour simply adapted the pattern of Mainland China and had not even a bit of Hong Kong's character'.⁶³ It is obvious that they saw China, where they had spent their whole lives to date, more as their home than Hong Kong. The

⁶⁰ Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 'Cong nanmin wenxue dao Xianggang wenxue 從難民文學到香港文學 (From Migrant Literature to Hong Kong Literature)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*) 62 (1990): 4.

⁶¹ Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 4.

⁶² Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 4, 6.

⁶³ Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 5. Huang Fanghua observes that 'although the left- and right-leaning writers all had strong feelings for China, those of the left-wing were concerned about the present, whereas those of the right-wing focused on tradition and their roots in China. See Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, 'Zhanhou Xianggang xiaoshuo: chaoyue zhengzhizhuhua he shangpinhua de bendihua jincheng 戰後香港小說: 超越政治化和商品化的本地化進程 (Post-War Hong Kong Novels: Transgressing the Localization Process of Politicization and Commercialization)', 157–58.

shared experience of 'thinking about home, being homesick and leaving one's country' (*sijia, huaixiang, quguo* 思家, 懷鄉, 去國) was the subject of the fiction of these right-leaning writers of the 1950s, apart from their well-known stories about 'the noble son who finds himself in dire straits and works as a shoeblick'.⁶⁴

'Exile Art and Literature' (*Liuwang wenyi* 流亡文藝) extensively reflects the experience of exile. The following passage from 'The Exile', the first chapter of the book *Hong Kong: Its Shadow in our Hearts* (1954) by Yi Junzuo 易君左, a journalist and writer of the 1950s, shows the exiles' curiosity about their journey but also their rootlessness, their despair, their uncertainty about the future, and their trust and hope:

Wanderlust flows in every man's blood stream but the earth fills the hearts of man. Those who leave the Motherland – the travellers who bid farewell to fathers and mothers – are today no longer a small group of people which may reduce to the level of one man in a family who seeks to satisfy a personal quest, nor confined to one household or one region which will forever stick in the minds of those who leave. To flee the misery and anxiety of life, to reach the light from the tunnel of cruelty and darkness of man's heart, to stand on the soil of liberty – this is the great fresco that man draws on the walls of his skin. The scenes he depicts tell not of hunger and sickness, poverty and misery but, taken in sum total, is a symbol of a rejuvenated nation and the wheel of time's progress.⁶⁵

According to Ng Ho, the period of exile literature in Hong Kong commenced following the communist victory on the Mainland in 1949. Ng Ho's definition of exile literature includes articles, journals, essays, and novels in which one can

⁶⁴ Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 'Cong nanmin wenxue dao Xianggang wenxue 從難民文學到香港文學 (From Migrant Literature to Hong Kong Literature)', 5. 'There are many of those unconventional stories of "the noble son who finds himself in dire straits and works as a shoeblick" in refugee literature.' See Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, 'Nanlai nanguo qi weiqian? Cong wushi niandai chu Xianggang de nanminchao tandao nanlai wenren zai Xianggang wentan de shengcun xingtai 南來南國豈為錢? ——從五十年代初香港的難民潮談到南來文人在香港文壇的生存形態 ("Moving South Perhaps for Money?" A Talk Starting from the Migrant Flow at the Beginning of the 1950s in Hongkong to the Southbound Literati's Form of Survival among Hong Kong's Literary Circles)', *文學世紀 Wenxue Shiji (Literary Century)* 4, no. 37 (2004): 52.

⁶⁵ The English translation is by Ng Ho from the first chapter 'The Exile' of Yi Junzuo's book *Hong Kong: Its Shadow in our Hearts* (1954). In: Ho Ng, 'Exile, a Story of Love and Hate', in *The China Factor in Hong Kong Cinema (Xianggang dianying de Zhongguo mailuo)*, (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1997), 31.

find 'the trials and tribulations of the intellectuals who became refugees at the time'.⁶⁶ And in spite of all their different motives, all of these works share one unique feature of a meditative and self-reflective realism. 'They held up a mirror to politics, the nation, society, and the individual'.⁶⁷ But 'these works are infused with descriptions of the turbulent times and uncertainties of life'.⁶⁸ The refugees' reasons and motives for writing are various, but generally they wrote out of economic necessity, as in the case of Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 and many others. It also happened to strengthen their sense of loyalty and duty to the homeland by which 'the authors hoped to arouse the morale of the refugees and to organize them into an effective opposition force against the new [communist] regime'.⁶⁹

Lin Shicun's novel *The Ostrich* is one example of how the migrant intellectuals in Hong Kong were criticized for their lack of responsibility and lack of will to fight for their country, despite their tremendous suffering as exiles and the multiple problems they faced in the colonial city. Lin Shicun compares their attitude and characteristics to those of an ostrich: on the one hand they could 'carry a heavy burden' and 'run a long distance', but on the other they would seek a place to hide rather than stand up for themselves and voice their concerns about China. Lin Shicun criticizes them severely: '[h]aving escaped the net cast by the Communist Party, they believed that they were now secure and could turn the desert land into a happy hunting ground ... Intellectuals should by rights be at the forefront in the task of saving China. Tragically, there are too many who still behave like ostriches'.⁷⁰ He divides the exiles into 'escapists' and 'pessimists', and both, according to him, need salvation and guidance to raise their spirits:

The majority of intellectuals have suffered under the enemy and have tasted the bitter fruits handed out by the Communist Party. But they lack the will

⁶⁶ See Lin Shicun's *The Ostrich*; Zhang Yifan's *Spring Comes to Tiu Keng Leng* (1954); Yi Junzuo's *A Selection of Essay by Junzuo* (1953) and *Hongkong: Its Shadow in Our Hearts* (1954); Chen Hanbo's *Underground Fire* (1952); Zeng Xianfa's *A Place of Makeshift Huts* (1955); Yang Jing's *The Lost Romance* (1960), and literary supplements of *Truth News* and *New Life Evening News*. See Ng, 34.

⁶⁷ Ng, 36.

⁶⁸ Ng, 34.

⁶⁹ Ng, 34.

⁷⁰ Ng, 36.

to fight. Now that they have escaped and taken safe refuge, they are afraid to discuss politics again. Indeed, they have completely forgotten the insult inflicted on the nation and the hatred incurred on their families. They have aestheticized their new state of existence in the term: "begin one's life anew." Such psychology is a mistake. But this is the only one part of it. There is another breed of intellectuals who seek excitement. These are the escapists. Then, there are those who sit around and grumble. These are the pessimists. These two groups are the most in need of salvation. To save them, we do not need any material substance. We need only correct their mistaken thinking and revive their spirit.⁷¹

4.2.3 *Hong Kong's unique and liberal cultural landscape*

Hong Kong is often described as a liberal a safe haven compared to the Mainland with its decades-long civil wars and constant political turmoil. In many ways it not only offered a unique space for migrant intellectuals from the Mainland but also served China, the US and Britain as a strategic location. The colonial city provided an artistic freedom which helped to foster modern Chinese literature, where writers were able to disseminate literary works that were either unavailable or utterly forbidden on the Mainland. Hong Kong also played a prominent role during the Cold War as a valuable strategic location for US intervention to counter Communist propaganda in Hong Kong and the Far East.

According to the literary scholar Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] the cultural workers from the Mainland benefitted substantially from Hong Kong's liberal space and atmosphere, in which they were able to continue their work after 1949 and to promote traditional Chinese culture. Hong Kong being severed from China's political turmoil, the intellectuals did not suffer from artistic or political oppression. In Liang's opinion they thrived both professionally and spiritually under colonial Hong Kong's non-interference policy:

Under these political changes, the cultural workers who came to the south before and after 1949 were feeling 'the decay of China's cultural blossom and fruit'. Therefore they wanted to promote China's traditional culture on that isolated overseas island. The cultural workers were committing themselves to newspapers and publications, filling teaching positions in secondary schools, and selecting papers for publishing. Although they did

⁷¹ Ng, 34f.

not particularly have the government's support in terms of promoting traditional Chinese culture through education and research, at least they were not oppressed. In addition, Hong Kong did not suffer from the Cultural Revolution or any kind of political movement that would have fiercely destroyed its culture and created a cultural rupture; nor were Chinese education and narratives oppressed, as in some Sinophobic countries in Asia.⁷²

The liberal atmosphere with comparatively few restrictions allowed the migrant writers to take a new look at neglected or even forgotten writers of the May Fourth Movement. For instance Liu Yichang's 劉以鬯 novel *The Drunkard* (*Jiutu* 酒徒) (1963) introduces and 're-evaluates writers who had been neglected since the May-Fourth Movement. It adds to a multi-faceted perspective by reviewing the May-Fourth Literature in Hong Kong especially the different social and cultural backgrounds that reveal a certain kind of selective reception of the May-Fourth tradition. And yet some works have been preserved apart from the mainstream literary history of Mainland China'.⁷³ A further example is *A Selection of the Best Short Stories of the Last Thirty Years* (*Sanshinian lai Zhongguo zuijia duanpian xiaoshuo* 三十年來中國最佳短篇小說選), an anthology of short stories compiled by Liu Yichang and published by *Literary Current* (*Wenyi xinchao* 文藝新潮), which introduced previously unknown writers of the 1930s and 1940s. Not only did Hong Kong offer this sort of setting, in which long-forgotten authors could thrive again; the colonial city had stored material of every kind that was not available in any other Chinese city except Taiwan, as Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] notes: 'since Hong Kong offered a more relaxed situation on either side of the Taiwan Straits, one was able to find various kinds of works from May Fourth onwards in Hong Kong's libraries, old bookstores and newspapers that could not be found in any Chinese communities'.⁷⁴

⁷² Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], "'Gaibian" de wenhua shenfen: yi wushi niandai Xianggang wenxue wei li 「改編」的文化身份：以五十年代香港文學為例 (‘Re-Editing’ the Cultural Identity: Taking Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s as an Example)’, *Wenxue shiji* 文學世紀 (*Literary Century*) 5, no. 2 (2005): 54.

⁷³ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 55.

⁷⁴ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 56.

For southbound literati such as Liu Yichang, Hong Kong provided the opportunity to explore new literary forms. He made a significant contribution by disseminating the new literary forms with an enormous editorial effort. Liu used Hong Kong as a window through which different genres of literature could be connected: 'Hong Kong became a window for Chinese literature, and was at the same time a huge bridge connecting Chinese-language literature in the world'.⁷⁵ In this way the colonial city was at the same time a window through which foreign, i.e. Western, values were transmitted. According to Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay] the migrant intellectuals enjoyed a liberal colonial government that advocated freedom of expression which provided the conditions for a public sphere that enabled the coexistence of different political and ideological positions.

The colonial government was not democratic, although it was liberal. The cultural space in Hong Kong was therefore the most open and tolerant in the context of China-Taiwan-Macau relations. Whether it was the Kuomintang or the Communist Party, pro-right or pro-left or even Trotskyites who was not accepted in the cross-straits relationship, all were able to enjoy the liberal atmosphere of Hong Kong. All of Hong Kong's cultural workers had the freedom to choose, and each promoted their principles and implemented their creative ideals. Amidst the political and climate created by the relationship between China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau, Hong Kong provided a public space that allowed ambiguous voices to contend with one another, tolerate mutual rejection and engage in equal discourse simultaneously. This openness and geographical advantage generated the closer and faster connection of Hong Kong's 1950s and 1960s literati to new cultural trends on the Mainland and in Taiwan.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, 'Yongbi jianzheng lishi 用筆見證歷史 (To Witness History with a Pen)', *Xianggang zuojiabao 香港作家報 (Hong Kong Writers)* 21, no. 2 (1997).

⁷⁶ Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], 'Yiwang de lishi, lishi de yiwang. Wu liushi niandai de Xianggang wenxue 遺忘的歷史, 歷史的遺忘——五, 六十年代的香港文學 (Forgetting History and the History of Forgetting: Hong Kong's Literature in the 50s and 60s)', 32. At this point, Zhang Yongmei follows the same line of reasoning as Zheng. See Zhang Yongmei 張詠梅, *Bianyuan yu zhongxin: lun Xianggang zuoyi xiaoshuo zhong de 'Xianggang' (1950-67) 邊緣與中心: 論香港左翼小說中的「香港」, (1950-67) (Margin and Center: Hong Kong in Leftist Novels, 1950-1967)* (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu youxian gongsi 天地圖書有限公司 (Cosmos Book Ltd), 2003), 54f. The term 'public sphere' which Zheng applies to Hong Kong is based on the Western concept of 'civil society,' which has entered to academic discourse in China and Taiwan. See Heath B. Chamberlain, 'On the Search for Civil Society in China', *Modern China* 19, no. 2 (1993): 199-215.

In addition to its relatively liberal stance, Hong Kong became part of the Cold war struggle. Yan argues that its situation amidst the clash of rightist and leftist camps and the possibility of the coexistence of both against the backdrop of the Iron Curtain generated an exceptional geopolitical landscape that could be found nowhere else:

The mutual confrontation of these two more or less balanced creative camps and the long-standing contest of these left and right political forces, combined with the entire Cold War setting, shaped a very interesting and long-lasting characteristic 'landscape' during the development of the Hong Kong novels. Such a characteristic and landscape had not been seen for decades either on the Mainland or in Taiwan.⁷⁷

In the chapter 'Hong Kong, the Fall of China and "*Pax*" *Americana*, 1949–1952',⁷⁸ Christopher Sutton stresses Hong Kong's important strategic position. Its increasing geopolitical value was strongly intertwined with US Cold War propaganda activities. Furthermore, it participated in a new phase in the Cold War with the formation of Communist China in October 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. By the time of the establishment of the PRC in 1949 the two rival empires – the US and China – had converged in Hong Kong. The Korean War and the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1954–1955 and 1958 added to the existing Cold War tension. The Hong Kong government was not interested in intervening or manoeuvring itself into the Cold War and the Kuomintang-Chinese Communist struggle. The authorities in Hong Kong in the 1950s 'adhered to a policy of strict neutrality in Chinese politics' and adopted 'an attitude of non-provocative firmness towards the two regimes'; as Steve Tsang sums it up, '[t]he Hong Kong government had to devise a strategy to prevent, on the one hand, such activities from turning Hong Kong into a Chinese political cockpit and, on the

⁷⁷ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代的香港小說 (Hong Kong Novels in the 1950s)'.

⁷⁸ Christopher Sutton, *Britain's Cold War in Cyprus and Hong Kong: A Conflict of Empires*, Britain and the World (s.l.: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 151 (italics in original).

other hand, to demonstrate its determination to hold the territory without provoking an irredentist response from the nationalistic PRC'.⁷⁹

Hong Kong was not immune to propaganda during this period. The writer Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍 (also known by the pen names Li Weike 李維克 and Li Ying 李影), an editor and southbound literatus who had left Guangdong for Hong Kong in the 1950s, emphasizes how this decade was a distinct period for Hong Kong, mentioning that apart from the British colonial government's liberal laissez-faire politics that allowed freedom of speech, it also became an outpost for propaganda activities:

When the frontiers of the world's status were set in the 1950s, the Korean War reached its climax and the US participated in Far East propaganda in line with the world affairs which were developing on China's border. The most conducive place to develop propaganda was Hong Kong. It was under British rule at the time; politics, economics and everything else operated under the banner of 'freedom'. The laissez-faire attitude allowed every person to have different opinions and act upon them without scruple as long as it was not perceived as a threat to security. Therefore the leftist as well as the rightist could produce propaganda, disseminate political opinions, publish newspapers and even set up schools in the territory.⁸⁰

In particular during the Korean War, writes Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, Hong Kong became an important location from which the US worked to contain the spread of communism. The PRC did not intervene because it was benefitting economically from Hong Kong's status under the United Nations' trade embargo on China at the time of the Korean War. China also did not want to interfere with US plans as Douglas MacArthur would otherwise carry out his threat of deploying nuclear weapons against China. 'For the purpose of common defence, the US could use Hong Kong as a base in certain circumstances. It was increasingly aware of the importance of Taiwan and Hong Kong to Far East politics, and during the

⁷⁹ Steve Tsang, 'Strategy for Survival: The Cold War and Hong Kong's Policy towards Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Activities in the 1950s', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 2 (1997): 298, 311, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086539708583002>.

⁸⁰ Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang wenxue gaishu 五十年代的香港文學概述 (An Overview of Hong Kong Literature in the 1950s)', *Wenxue yanjiu 文學研究 (Literature Studies)* 8 (2007): 174f.

[US] deployment Hong Kong became an outpost for holding back and transforming China'. Moreover, 'the [US Information Service] was the most important of the US bureaus stationed in Hong Kong. It was responsible for propagating the psychological warfare and other important missions. The national plan was to destroy the power of the Chinese Communist Party on the Mainland and cut down its supporting resources'.⁸¹

From 1949 onwards Hong Kong functioned as a 'British colonial outpost', as Tracy Steele puts it:

[It was at a] crossroads where powerful military and political currents intersected: the Cold War in Asia among the United States, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China (PRC); the unfinished civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists; and the anticolonial rhetoric of the competing Chinese camps, both capable of causing agitation or inciting subversive activity among the overwhelmingly Chinese majority in Hong Kong.⁸²

4.2.4 *The Greenback culture in Hong Kong*

Hong Kong's advantageous position for propagandist activity gave rise to the emergence of US 'greenback culture' – all US-sponsored activities that advocated the values of the so-called free world – which peaked in the 1950s when the Cold War was progressing in Asia. US funding gave Hong Kong's literature a strong boost, although it also changed the territory's cultural landscape fundamentally. The greenback had arrived in the colonial city as if it had, as Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay] puts it, 'engulfed the sky and swept the ground' (*putian gaidi erlai* 鋪天蓋地而來). Promoting American culture was part of the US propaganda plan: '[m]uch of the American money was channelled into setting up magazines,

⁸¹ Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, 'Wushi niandai meiyuan wenhua yu Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代美元文化與香港小說 (The 1950s Culture of the US Dollar and the Hong Kong Novels)', *Ershiyi shiji shuang yuekan* 二十一世紀雙月刊 (*Twenty-First Century Bimonthly*), 2006, 87.

⁸² Tracy Steele, 'Hong Kong and the Cold War in the 1950s', in *Hong Kong in the Cold War*, ed. Priscilla Roberts and John M. Carroll, 1st ed. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016), 92, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1gsmvv5>. Hong Kong and its refugees became part of the unfinished civil war, as Chi-Kwan Mark observes: 'Both the Chinese Communists and Chinese Nationalists sought to win the hearts and minds of the "overseas Chinese" as part of their unfinished civil war'. See Mark, 'The "Problem of People"', 1179.

newspapers, and publishing houses which published translations of American “great works” and pro-western articles on current affairs in order to generate an interest in American culture and ways of life and, indirectly, to disseminate the values of freedom and democracy that were identified with western culture’.⁸³ The US established its Central Intelligence Agency-funded Committee for Free Asia, later renamed the Asia Foundation, which dominated the Hong Kong publishing market by funding most of the publishing houses. Christopher Sutton mentions that the work of George Orwell was very common: for instance the publication of an illustrated Chinese-language edition of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was immensely popular.⁸⁴

During the ideological battle of the Cold War years William Tay subsumed these platforms and print media distributing literature such as newspapers, literary supplements and magazines, and publishing houses, under three main categories: ‘those with foreign economic (and political) backgrounds, those produced by in-house writers’ groups and enjoying relative independence, and those aimed strictly at profit’.⁸⁵

The struggle between the left- and right-wing camps, as Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] observes, had begun during the 1940s on the Mainland and continued in Hong Kong in the 1950s in the aftermath of the founding of the PRC: ‘[i]t was a fact that both the ideological struggles and the literary struggles of the 1940s continued and accelerated in Hong Kong, especially during the Cold

⁸³ Elaine Yee Lin Ho, ‘Nationalism, Internationalism, the Cold War: Crossing Literary-Cultural Boundaries in 1950s Hong Kong’, in *China Abroad: Travels, Subjects, Spaces*, ed. Julia Kuehn and Elaine Yee Lin Ho (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 88. For a detailed discussion, see Wang Meixiang 王梅香, ‘Yinbi quanli: meiyuan wenyi tizhi xia de taigang wenxue (1950–1962) 隱蔽權力: 美援文藝體制下的台港文學 (1950–1962) (Unattributed Power: Taiwan and Hong Kong Literature under the U.S. Aid Literary Institution)’ (doctoral dissertation, Guoli qinghua daxue 國立清華大學 (National Tsing Hua University), 2015).

⁸⁴ Christopher Sutton, *Britain’s Cold War in Cyprus and Hong Kong: A Conflict of Empires*, Britain and the World (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 157.

⁸⁵ Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], ‘Colonialism, the Cold War Era, and Marginal Space. The Existential Condition of Five Decades of Hong Kong Literature’, in *Chinese Literature in the Second Half of a Modern Century: A Critical Survey*, ed. Pang-yuan Chi and Der-Wei Wang Wang (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 34.

War era of the 1950s'.⁸⁶ In the fifties the right-leaning camp took over the cultural field from the left-leaning camp which had dominated in the forties. The left-wing writers were generally only loosely organized and did not form a cohesive group in Hong Kong. For instance comparing Hong Kong's left-wing poets of the 1950s with those of the 1930s, Zijiang Song concludes that the former were less well-organized, although 'those in 1950s Hong Kong had very different backgrounds [and] could only loosely be considered left-wing in a fairly broad sense'. However, publishing work in a left- or right-wing newspaper or journal does not necessarily reveal a writer's political leaning. Song lists two reasons why poets were labelled left-wing: they had been converted to communism at some point, or they published their work in left-wing newspapers; in comparison, the characteristics that come with a right-wing writer were more obvious due to the funding that the publishing houses received from the Asia Foundation (*Yazhou jijinhou* 亞洲基金會), making them products of greenback culture. They were also considered right-wing if they stood in opposition to the communist left or considered themselves merely visitors to Hong Kong and left for capitalist countries around the late 1950s.⁸⁷

Literary critics and writers had mixed and contrary opinions on the greenback subsidy and the clash of left- and right-wing power in Hong Kong. Some recalled their first-hand experience with the greenback subsidy and criticized it for intruding on the 'purity' of literature. Writers had witnessed a negative effect on the quality of literature, as the US funding did not come without ideological engagement. As such, it is argued by literary critics and writers, politics interfered with or even suppressed literature, and as a result literary

⁸⁶ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Writing across Borders: Hong Kong's 1950s and the Present', in *Diasporic Histories: Cultural Archives of Chinese Transnationalism*, ed. Andrea Riemenschneider (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 26.

⁸⁷ Zijiang Song, 'Translation, Cultural Politics, and Poetic Form: A Comparative Study of the Translation of Modernist Poetry in *Les Contemporains* (1932–35) and *Literary Currents* (1956–59)', in *Translation and Academic Journals: The Evolving Landscape of Scholarly Publishing*, ed. Yifeng Sun (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2015), 105–6. In his paper Song compares two influential literary journals that strongly promoted Western modernist literature in the 1930s and 1950s, arguing that the ideological battle between members of the Left and Right Leagues in the 1930s had continued in the 1950s in Hong Kong. Song, 98.

works were not able to stay in the realm of purity. There are three general standpoints here: firstly, Hong Kong became a battlefield for ideological struggle rather than a niche for purely artistic work. Second, although the writers' work had been infiltrated by American values, they benefitted from the steady US funding which provided a niche for them and helped literature and literary outlets to prosper, in turn facilitating the formation of a local, Hong Kong literature. Third, it seems that publishers and writers made the publication of high-quality literature their main focus and so were able to not pay too much attention to the left-right division, although some writers were less fortunate and had little choice as they struggled to survive on a daily basis. It certainly cannot be denied that greenback culture had an influence on the selection and quality of literary work in Hong Kong, although its huge financial support for publishing companies and writers, especially Chinese émigré writers, at the time of a major refugee crisis when financial support was much needed, must be acknowledged. Many writers voiced their concern that the ideological background of US funding polluted literary work, but some found a niche for themselves and were able to make their own choices. Moreover, many translations of foreign works were financed by greenback subsidies, and these had also exerted an important influence on the formation and development of modern Hong Kong literature. Taking all these factors into account, one cannot ignore the fact that greenback culture stimulated and supported Hong Kong's literary development, firstly by boosting translation activities in Hong Kong and providing a space for the reception and dissemination of Western literature, and secondly by helping local and migrant writers to follow their profession.

The writer Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 writes of the Hong Kong literati suffering in a repressive atmosphere, although he also witnessed a transformation in Hong Kong literature and speaks of a 'formalistic turn' – by which he probably means the shift to a formalistic style in modernism, although he does not provide further details on its characteristics – that evolved during the Cold War years of the 1950s and can be tied to the emergence and supremacy of greenback culture. Liu mentions the left-wing authors who left a void in the literature scene when they departed from Hong Kong for the Mainland. Greenback culture was also

implemented to contain communistic power in Hong Kong. The production of literature in Hong Kong was given a strong and much-needed boost to fill the void that the migrant writers had left, although financial aid from the US did not come without changing the shape of its literature; it added a political connotation to it which intruded on the liberal atmosphere:

In 1949 Hong Kong entered a 'formalistic turn', and literature also changed its original form and took on another shape. In the beginning a large number of writers left Hong Kong and headed north, and as a consequence literary life in the colony almost lost the conditions it needed to develop. Only later the wave of greenback culture turned the literary world to a fake facade. At the same time Hong Kong's literature appeared to be alive, although its transcendentality actually wore off. The US supported Hong Kong with financial aid, which also changed the shape of Hong Kong literature by adding an overly thick political flavour to it. Some writers used their pens as tools for political propaganda in order to survive. The former situation is worse than the latter; the writers were forced to use their pens for political propaganda. In the early 1950s writers showed signs of degeneration, whereas Hong Kong literature in the early 1950s was to a certain degree characterised by struggle.⁸⁸

Under these circumstances it is not easy for excellent work to emerge. Under the impact of the greenback wave writers lost their ability to think independently and even lost their creative drive. They did not have the courage to stick to their principles, and the majority of their work is overly ideological and lacking in artistic charm.⁸⁹

This all considered and in addition to his experience of long-standing editorial work for several literary magazines, Liu Yichang concludes that literature and politics in Hong Kong were more strongly linked at that time than in previous decades: '[i]t is almost impossible to completely separate literary composition from politics ... In the early fifties, many of those [writers] acted as mouthpieces for political purposes, while a few followed purely artistic standards'.⁹⁰ Over time Hong Kong literature slowly became an integral part of politics: '[t]he greenback has become a magnet which has sucked up writers like little nails. Politics

⁸⁸ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, 'Wushi niandai chuqi de Xianggang wenxue 五十年代初期的香港文學 (Hong Kong Literature in the Early 1950s)', *Xianggang wenxue 香港文學 (Hong Kong Literary)* 6 (1985): 13.

⁸⁹ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, 18.

⁹⁰ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, 17.

continuously “nibbled” at literature until it almost became a part of politics itself.⁹¹ According to Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, literary works did bear traces of infiltration by ideology, and he vaguely points out the characteristics: ‘[i]t seems left- and right-wing novels also hoped to rise above their protagonists’ fate and reflect the causal relationship in politics’.⁹² Hong Kong writers and publishing houses were affected by this ideological battlefield in one way or another. The media landscape was, according to critics, divided into left- and right-leaning camps; publishing houses were reliant on funding and according to Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], it was obvious which publishers were receiving a US subsidy:

The clash of the left- and right-leaning southbound literati very soon got involved in the Cold War between the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union. After the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, the US increased its oppression of the spread of communism in Chinese society, with Washington supporting the Asia Foundation (亞洲基金會), subsidizing Everyman’s Publications (人人出版社) and founding Union Publications (友聯出版社) behind the scenes.⁹³

The greenback certainly gave literary institutions the opportunity to thrive and grow, and many desperate writers and run-down publishing houses profited from US-sponsored literary activities and funding from the US News agency flowing into the right-leaning camp, as Huang Weiliang 黃維樑 observes: ‘American news agencies published book series and the power of right-wing literature became quite enormous. Left-wing writers of the fifties captured the newspaper [format] as their forum’, but the greenback subsidy was able to support magazines for a lengthy period. Huang compares the two literary supplements *Youths’ Garden* (*Qingnian leyuan* 青年樂園) (see Illustration 4.1)

⁹¹ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, 18.

⁹² Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, ‘Wushi niandai meiyuan wenhua yu Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代美元文化與香港小說 (The 1950s Culture of the US Dollar and the Hong Kong Novels)’, 95.

⁹³ Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], ‘Yiwang de lishi, lishi de yiwang. Wu liushi niandai de Xianggang wenxue 遺忘的歷史，歷史的遺忘——五，六十年代的香港文學 (Forgetting History and the History of Forgetting: Hong Kong’s Literature in the 50s and 60s)’, 30.

and *Chinese Students' Weekly* (*Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao* 中國學生周報), subsidized by opposing camps. He concludes that the US-supported *Chinese Students' Weekly* had a longer lifespan (it was issued for 22 years, from 1952 to 1974), despite the fact that the authors published in *Youths' Garden* were much younger and had less experience. *Chinese Students' Weekly* was generally more popular: its contents were more diverse and wide-ranging and it had a stronger literary-historical impact than *Youths' Garden*.⁹⁴ The editors of *Chinese Students' Weekly* were pursuing clear aims when they launched the magazine in 1952: they hoped to set up an anti-leftist propaganda front amidst the democratic and liberal environment and to establish a culture and communication platform providing guidance for students in Southeast Asia. At the same time, editors and writers adopted the ideas of the May Fourth movement and took responsibility for social education.⁹⁵

Many voices have emphasized the advantages of the greenback subsidy, which helped literature to flourish with its promotion and dissemination of Hong Kong and Western literature. Some publications reached a readership outside Hong Kong and the subsidy provided a literary and publishing forum for writers. The greenback also supported many translation activities that influenced and impacted on the development of literature. Novelists 'drew nourishment from

⁹⁴ Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, 'Xianggang wenxue de fazhan 香港文學的發展 (The Development of Hong Kong Literature)', 94.

⁹⁵ Wang Zhaogang 王兆剛, "'Wushi niandai Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao" wenyi ban yanjiu 五十年代「中國學生週報」文藝版研究 (Study on the Literary Supplement "The Chinese Students' Weekly" in the 1950s)" (master's thesis, Lingnan University, 2007), 16. Wang Zhaogang discerns three striking developments in the *Chinese Students' Weekly*: first, they used the slogan 'democracy and freedom' against the CCP's cultural propaganda and published articles critical of the CCP. Second, editors and writers created a liberal atmosphere for art and literature in the *Chinese Students' Weekly* which was not subject to political interference. The editors were free to continuously improve the content of the literature and art sections, maintaining an open attitude when introducing Western culture. They tried different styles of cultural discourse to facilitate 'communication between Chinese and Western culture' that complied with the agenda of the May Fourth New Culture Movement; and lastly they shaped the readers' minds. As a main purpose they often raised issues relevant to the next generation's education, voicing considerable criticism of overseas Chinese education policy in Southeast Asia in the journal. Wang Zhaogang 王兆剛, 21.

their experience of translating modernist works',⁹⁶ which also led to the emergence of new literary styles and diverse types of writing.

In He Hui's 何慧 opinion the greenback culture was chiefly beneficial. The US helped Hong Kong's contemporary literature to prosper by providing an opportunity for writers to publish literary works and a sphere in which to publish them. 'They all published in the magazines subsidized by Asia Publications (Yazhou chubanshe 亞洲出版社) and Union Publications (Youlian chubanshe 友聯出版社). [The greenback] created the first prosperous period of Hong Kong's contemporary literature'.⁹⁷ For instance Union Publications responded to the demands of a wide and diverse range of readers with the journals *Motherland Weekly* (*Zuguo zhoukan* 祖國周刊), provided intellectuals with *College life* (*Daxue shenghuo* 大學生活), students with *Chinese Students' Weekly* (*Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao* 中國學生週報) and youngsters with *Children's Playground* (*Ertong leyuan* 兒童樂園). According to Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, US-funded publications reached innumerable readers outside Hong Kong in Chinese communities in Southeast Asia.⁹⁸

Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay] points out the opportunities that publishing houses such as Everyman's Publications (*Renren chubanshe* 人人出版社) and Union Publications (*Youlian chubanshe* 友聯出版社) gained from the Asia Foundation subsidy, whose goal was to suppress the spread of communism by criticizing it and propagating American values: '[t]he magazine *Everyman's Literature* established in 1952 (with editors, in succession, Huang Sicheng, Li Kuang, Qi Huang, et al.), has allowed right-wing writers who were exhausted by

⁹⁶ See Cheung, 'Translation Activities in Hong Kong – 1842 to 1997', 2198.

⁹⁷ He Hui 何慧, 'Jianku sui yue de langman qinghuai: luelun wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 艱苦歲月的浪漫情懷——略論五十年代的香港小說 (Romantic Feelings in Difficult Years. A Brief Discussion of Hong Kong Novels of the 1950s)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 *Hong Kong Literary* 119 (1994): 20.

⁹⁸ Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 'Cong nanmin wenxue dao Xianggang wenxue 從難民文學到香港文學 (From Migrant Literature to Hong Kong Literature)', 6.

life and lacked a publishing forum to steadily carry out their right-wing work'.⁹⁹ This was made possible not only by indirect (financial) support but also by providing means of advertising American culture and value systems via American news agencies and the translation of masterpieces of American literature in monthly magazines such as *World Today Press* (*Jinri shijie chubanshe* 今日世界出版社).¹⁰⁰ 'In contrast, Union Publications exerted a more profound influence in Hong Kong [than Everyman's Publications]: they targeted different readerships'.¹⁰¹ And '[f]acing the rightists' power, Hong Kong's leftist camp responded with every effort but apparently ran out of funding.' Regarding magazine outlets, some leftist magazines were able to counterbalance the tide of rightist magazines in the 1950s (see Table 4.1 below). 'All in all, comparing the number of published books and magazines, leftist literature of the 1950s falls behind the rightist ones'. Records (although incomplete) collected by the Hong Kong government's Book Registration Office of 1952 show that right-leaning publishing houses outnumbered left-leaning ones. By 1956 the Association of Hong Kong Publishers and Distributors listed about fifty publishers, many of which were receiving a greenback subsidy.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Zheng Shusen [William Tay] 鄭樹森, 'Yiwang de lishi, lishi de yiwang. Wu liushi niandai de Xianggang wenxue 遺忘的歷史, 歷史的遺忘——五, 六十年代的香港文學 (Forgetting History and the History of Forgetting: Hong Kong's Literature in the 50s and 60s)', *Suye wenxue* 素葉文學 (*Plain Leaves Literature*) 61, no. 36 (1996): 30.

¹⁰⁰ According to Cheung, *World Today Press* published more than 300 translated works during its 30 years of publication activity, more than the total number of translation registered as published in Hong Kong from 1888 to 1948. See Cheung, 'Translation Activities in Hong Kong – 1842 to 1997', 2198.

¹⁰¹ Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], 30. See also Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], *Xianggang xin wenxue nianbiao, 1950–1969 nian* 香港新文學年表, 1950–1969 年 (*A Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969*), 19–20.

¹⁰² Cheung, 'Translation Activities in Hong Kong – 1842 to 1997', 2197.

Table 4.1: Examples mentioned by Zheng of the magazines of each camp

Year	Left-wing	vs.	Right-wing
1956	<i>Youths' Garden</i> (<i>Qingnian leyuan</i> 青年樂園)		<i>The Chinese Student Weekly</i> (<i>Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao</i> 中國學生周報)
1957	<i>The Young Companion</i> (<i>Liangyou zazhi</i> 良友雜誌)		<i>Asian Book Journal</i> (<i>Yazhou shubao</i> 亞洲書報)
1959	<i>Little Friend</i> (<i>Xiao pengyou</i> 小朋友)		Children's Garden (<i>Ertong leyuan</i> 兒童樂園)

Source: Zheng Shusen 1996, 31.

However Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay] cannot help but emphasize the advantages of the American funding: '[a]midst the Cold War climate of the two east-west camps, the leftists and the rightists in Hong Kong Chinese society had been fighting an ideological battle throughout the 1950s and the 1960s. Hong Kong's right-leaning culture would have perhaps "suffered a premature death" without the initial "irrigation" of US funding'.¹⁰³ As mentioned, while the American-subsidized anti-communist publications experienced the greatest boost, according to Zhao Xifang 趙稀方 greenback culture also facilitated the emergence of a diverse body of writing:

Hong Kong's anti-communist art and literature flourished with the American capital subsidy. The most influential Hong Kong publishing agencies subsidized by the American dollar were Asia Publications,

¹⁰³ See Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], 31.

Freedom Publications, etc, which jointly published anti-communist newspapers and books on literature and art including novels, reportage, biographies, translations, and even comic books, with which they almost dominated Hong Kong's literary circles.¹⁰⁴

In general, it might be difficult to estimate the degree of influence that the greenback culture had on Hong Kong's literary production. The southbound writer Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 notices and criticizes the complex entanglement between literature and politics, but as an editor he claims to have made literature his main priority. He '[did] not inquire about the political direction, but rather looked at the quality of a work ... and when selecting a manuscript he did not make a distinction between left, centre, and right'.¹⁰⁵ The editor and poet Ma Lang 馬朗 [Ronald Mar] shares the same standpoint when he talks about his experience with *Literary Current* (*Wenyi Xinchao* 文藝新潮), which he launched in 1956 without a US subsidy. The journal enjoyed a short-lived success of three years, but in the harsh financial circumstances of the time remaining neutral, and its not getting pulled into the ideological struggle can be seen as a remarkable achievement.¹⁰⁶ According to Ma Lang [Ronald Mar] a few journals receiving funding from the US were themselves seen as 'greenback', but they did not propagate the values of the free world. Another editor, Kun Nan, had a similar

¹⁰⁴ Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, 'Wushi niandai meiyuan wenhua yu Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代美元文化與香港小說 (The 1950s Culture of the US Dollar and the Hong Kong Novels)', 88. Liu Shuyong mentions too, the „greenback” superiority in the publishing field. See Liu Shuyong 劉蜀永, *Jianming Xianggang shi* 簡明香港史 (*A Concise History of Hong Kong*) (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian 三聯書店 (Joint Publishing (Hong Kong)), 2009), 444. In some cases the source of the funding is not obvious; for instance while the journal *Literature World* (*Wenxue shijie* 文學世界) founded by Huang Tianshi (黃天石) [or Jie Ke 傑克] in 1954, later renamed *Hong Kong's Writers Association* (*Xianggang bihui* 香港筆會) in 1956 was run by right-leaning writers, it was not officially subsidized by the US. See Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 'Cong nanmin wenxue dao Xianggang wenxue 從難民文學到香港文學 (From Migrant Literature to Hong Kong Literature)', 6.

¹⁰⁵ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, 'Zhi buke erwei: Liu Yichang tan yansu wenxue 知不可而為——劉以鬯先生談嚴肅文學 (Knowing What Is Impossible: Mr. Liu Yichang Talks about Serious Literature)', *Bafang wenyi congkan* 八方文藝叢刊 (*Art Journal of Eight Directions*) 6 (1987): 59.

¹⁰⁶ Lu Zhaoling 盧昭靈, 'Wushi niandai de xiandai zhuyi yundong: "wenyi xinzhao" de yiyi he jiazhi 五十年代的現代主義運動——「文藝新潮」的意義和價值 (The Modernism Movement in the 1950s: The Significance and Value of *Literary Current*)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*) 49 (1989): 10.

view. It was important for him to ‘pay attention to the literature, and not to whether it is left- or right-wing; as long it is literature, it gets accepted. This became a conventional approach in Hong Kong supplements and magazines in the fifties and sixties’.¹⁰⁷

The southbound writers Murong Yujun, Liu Yichang, and Kun Nan conversely give prominence to the importance of literature itself and to the authors’ personal circumstances, particularly if their life and survival were at stake. The writer Murong Yujun remembers that it was difficult to differentiate friend from foe; but it did not matter whether one was left- or right-wing when surviving was the only thing that counted: ‘[d]ue to the chaotic political directions and diverse orientations in that period no one was able to guess whether the person in front of us was friend or a foe ... Hong Kong’s newspapers and periodicals at the time were very clearly divided into two camps. And those few that were neither left nor right had to follow market trends to survive and find a path for survival’. Huang Jichi 黃繼持 also acknowledges the cruel market trend, writing that authors and famous people made no exceptions and tended to popularize their literature in order ‘to sell manuscripts’ (*maiwen* 賣文). Others used different pen names to publish in newspapers with different political orientations.¹⁰⁸

Liu Yichang experienced extreme hardship and realized that he had to write popular novels for a living (*xiegao weisheng* 寫稿維生). He found Hong Kong society was not merciful to writers and the sale of literature was subjected to economic fluctuation.¹⁰⁹ Liu produced more than thirty serialized stories

¹⁰⁷ Ma Lang 馬朗 and Du Jiaqi 杜家祁, ‘Weihshenme shi xiandai zhuyi? : Du Jiaqi, Ma Lang, duitan 為甚麼是「現代主義」? ——杜家祁, 馬朗對談 (Why Modernism?: Conversation between Tu Jiaqi and Ma Lang)’, *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literature*), no. 224 (2003): 26.

¹⁰⁸ Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], *Xianggang xin wenxue nianbiao, 1950–1969 nian* 香港新文學年表, 1950–1969 年 (*A Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969*), 12.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Hong Kong literature is stronger when subjected to economical than to political disruptions’. See Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, ‘Zhi buke erwei: Liu Yichang tan yansu wenxue 知不可而為——劉以鬯先生談嚴肅文學 (Knowing What Is Impossible: Mr. Liu Yichang Talks about Serious Literature)’, 65.

writing a total of 13000 characters per day.¹¹⁰ The standard royalties for an author at the time amounted to 5–10 Hong Kong dollars per 1,000 characters,¹¹¹ although American-subsidized publishing houses such as Asia Publications offered from 20–35 Hong Kong dollars per thousand characters. While it is not clear how much funding Asia Publications and Union Publications, the two most prominent publishing houses, received, their royalties were certainly the highest.¹¹²

The effect of greenback culture in the 1950s is probably most obvious in the flourishing of journals and magazines. It was a period when financial and spiritual support was most needed by Hong Kong writers. He Hui 何慧 describes the literati's broken spirit and deep depression, and how young writers entering literary circles found a remedy in devoting tremendous effort to launching journals and magazines:

Hong Kong's literary circles were at the time rippled through with a certain depression and melancholy; they followed the scent of corruption and were full of sentimental love and dispirited homesickness. It was a time when young people in Hong Kong still exerted themselves to follow their initiatives; they hoped to break free of the left-right combat and the East-West cultural dilemma. They faced their innermost beings and looked into their feelings using their own language, exposing their souls without needing to rely on external powers.¹¹³

Cai Yanpei 蔡炎培 points out the importance of print media and its task of reviving the people's broken spirit: 'Hong Kong in the fifties, many years after the

¹¹⁰ Liang Bingjung 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], "'Gaibian" de wenhua shenfen: yi wushi niandai Xianggang wenxue wei li 「改編」的文化身份：以五十年代香港文學為例 ('Re-Editing' the Cultural Identity: Taking Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s as an Example)', 53.

¹¹¹ Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, 'Wushi niandai meiyuan wenhua yu Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代美元文化與香港小說 (The 1950s Culture of the US Dollar and the Hong Kong Novels)', 88; Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 'Wushi niandai fuxian de Xianggang wenxue 五十年代浮現的香港文學 (The Emergence of Hong Kong Literature in the 1950s)', *Wenxue yanjiu 文學研究 (Literature Studies)* 6 (2007): 109.

¹¹² Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, 88; Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 111.

¹¹³ He Hui 何慧, 'Jianku suiyue de langman qinghuai: lüelun wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 艱苦歲月的浪漫情懷——略論五十年代的香港小說 (Romantic Feelings in Difficult Years. A Brief Discussion of Hong Kong Novels of the 1950s)', 28.

war, was still in full swing. There was no TV, only homes with radio listeners, and the red ID card of the time. Surfing the Internet was unimaginable. Newspapers were the only source of nutrition for the public's spirit'.¹¹⁴

The writers' significant contributions and strong efforts to engage with editing and publishing work helped to foster many literary journals and magazines in particular and the development of Hong Kong literature in general: '[i]n the late fifties, engagement by some decent newspaper supplements and the help of some enthusiastic people who launched literary magazines brought a creative boost that countered the image of a shallow culture'.¹¹⁵ Serial publications such as newspapers, supplements, and magazines were printed relatively inexpensively and reached a wide audience. Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay] goes so far as to propose that because Hong Kong is at the Chinese margin its greenback-funded publications were able to reach that country's centre.

For China, Hong Kong is located at the border whether from the geographical, political or cultural perspective. Anti-communist novels published by Asia Publications and Freedom Publications in the 1950s obviously did not entirely target a local audience but would rather be stationed at the frontier whilst shouting out for the Central Plain. And some newspapers, such as the *Hong Kong Times* and *Motherland*, were also calling to the centre from the periphery.¹¹⁶

Hong Kong's massive literary output was not only due to the American subsidy, thriving publication outlets and wide dissemination: southbound and local writers raised the literary standard and contributed to the prospering literary field of the 1950s. The advent of the migrant intellectuals led to the formation of a relatively stable core of writers who helped Hong Kong literature to escape its

¹¹⁴ Cai Yanpei 蔡炎培, 'Wushi niandai de wenyi qingnian 五十年代的文藝青年 (The Literary Youth in the 1950s)', *Wenxue yanjiu 文學研究 (Literature Studies)* 8 (2007): 180.

¹¹⁵ Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 'Wushi niandai fuxian de Xianggang wenxue 五十年代浮現的香港文學 (The Emergence of Hong Kong Literature in the 1950s)', 107.

¹¹⁶ Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], 'Yiwang de lishi, lishi de yiwang. Wu liushi niandai de Xianggang wenxue 遺忘的歷史, 歷史的遺忘——五, 六十年代的香港文學 (Forgetting History and the History of Forgetting: Hong Kong's Literature in the 50s and 60s)', 33.

‘drifting-duckweed fate’ (*fupingban piaobo de mingyun* 浮萍般漂泊的命運).¹¹⁷ Local writers emerged and added a new force to the migrant writers, and Hong Kong’s local literary work improved and gradually became prominent.¹¹⁸ Businessmen brought capital into the colonial city, whose cultural workers were fired with hope and idealism.¹¹⁹ Exiled and at the margin of their homeland, ‘literary composition became the life source and spiritual sustenance’ of the migrant literati.¹²⁰

In the context of the different influences on Hong Kong’s literature of the 1950s, Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍 observes that the Chinese intellectuals exiled to the south brought a profound culture to ‘that desolate island [Hong Kong]’: ‘[t]hey not only made the city one with a material culture, they simultaneously increased the effects of a spiritual culture’.¹²¹ Against a backdrop of immense economic hardship and aching loneliness, the intellectuals channelled their efforts and helped to increase cultural standards in the colony’s society, as they felt free to express their literary ideas in that liberal place. Although the efforts they made were in vain, they were successful in setting a new direction for Hong Kong’s literature: ‘[i]n Hong Kong literature, southbound writers around the fifties created work of sufficient literary importance and opened a new pathway for Hong Kong literature’.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Liu Shuyong 劉蜀永, *Jianming Xianggang shi* 簡明香港史 (A Concise History of Hong Kong), 444.

¹¹⁸ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, ‘Wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代的香港小說 (Hong Kong Novels in the 1950s)’.

¹¹⁹ For instance around the time of the establishment of the PRC in 1949 many Shanghai bankers chose to leave the mainland and settle in Hong Kong. From there they could observe the political situation on the Mainland and learn ‘to deal with the united front tactics and alignment of both the CCP and the KMT’. See Li Peide 李培德 [Lee Pui-tak], ‘Dealings with CCP and KMT in British Hong Kong: The Shanghai Bankers, 1948–1951 (在英屬香港面對中國共產黨和中國國民黨——上海銀行家的抉擇與挑戰, 1948~1951年)’, *Translocal Chinese: East Asian Perspectives* 11, no. 1 (17 February 2017): 127, <https://doi.org/10.1163/24522015-01101007>.

¹²⁰ He Hui 何慧, ‘Jianku sui Yue de langman qinghuai: luelun wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 艱苦歲月的浪漫情懷——略論五十年代的香港小說 (Romantic Feelings in Difficult Years. A Brief Discussion of Hong Kong Novels of the 1950s)’ 21.

¹²¹ Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, ‘Wushi niandai fuxian de Xianggang wenxue 五十年代浮現的香港文學 (The Emergence of Hong Kong Literature in the 1950s)’ 106.

¹²² Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 107–8.

Apart from these migrant writers who had brought their literary traditions with them to Hong Kong, a local Hong Kong body of literature was gradually forming, as Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞 observes: '[t]ruly, the confrontation of the left-right camps in literature did not cease and lasted throughout the 1950s, but as time went by many more of the topics and concepts of the novels produced became local Hong Kong ones ... Since then, from the perspective of Hong Kong literature as a whole, the development of novels produced clearly began gradually to shift to the local'.¹²³

Hong Kong literature of the 1950s is often linked to and compared with Chinese literary traditions of the 1930s and 1940s, firstly because the advent of the migrant intellectuals in the 1950s generated an intersection point at which different literary trajectories converged; secondly because Hong Kong's literary tradition is to a certain degree rooted in past Chinese literary tradition and history; and thirdly, the connection between May Fourth and Hong Kong was created (for instance by Liu Yichang) to revive neglected and forgotten writers from China's past.¹²⁴ As Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] explains in his discussion of three Hong Kong novels from the 1940s and 1950s, the authors adopt a historical and nationalistic perspective with nationalistic, realistic and psychological features reflecting important artistic and literary trends, such as

¹²³ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代的香港小說 (Hong Kong Novels in the 1950s)', 75.

¹²⁴ He Hui 何慧 lists at this point: (re-) action to feudalism, rebellion, proletariat, migrants' conditions, and humanism. He Hui 何慧, 'Jianku sui Yue de langman qinghuai: luelun wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 艱苦歲月的浪漫情懷——略論五十年代的香港小說 (Romantic Feelings in Difficult Years. A Brief Discussion of Hong Kong Novels of the 1950s)', 21. According to Leung, modern Hong Kong poetry stems from '... a selective inheritance of classical Chinese poetry and the new poetry of the May 4th tradition, as well as a creative response to Western modern poetry'. Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Modern Hong Kong Poetry: Negotiation of Cultures and the Search for Identity', *Modern Chinese Literature* 9, no. 2 (1996): 221; Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], "'Gaibian" de wenhua shenfen: yi wushi niandai Xianggang wenxue wei li 「改編」的文化身份：以五十年代香港文學為例 ("Re-Editing" the Cultural Identity: Taking Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s as an Example)', 55. In 'The Drunkard' Liu Yichang connects the 1950s-'60s protagonist with China's (literary) tradition of the 1930s-'40s. Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, 'Kuayue 1949: Liu Yichang he Xianggang wenxue 跨越 1949: 劉以鬯和香港文學 (To Transcend 1949: Liu Yichang and Hong Kong Literature)'.

those of the May Fourth Movement. But at the same time the greenback culture and ‘central plain mentality’ also had a considerable impact on these novels.¹²⁵

Apart from its link to China’s literary history of previous decades, the 1950s can be understood as an independent period (*zili qi* 自立期) in Hong Kong literature that paved the way for literary trends such as modern literature (1960s), popular literature (1970s), and a diversification of genres (1980s) that were further developed in the following decades.¹²⁶

4.3 ‘Let us pick a beautiful piece of the forbidden fruit.’: The introduction of Modernism

The *Literary Current* (*Wenyi xinchao* 文藝新潮 1956–1959) was one of the most influential 1950s Hong Kong literary journals due to its promotion of Western modernist poetry and writings.¹²⁷ The journal is also seen as the epitome of Hong

¹²⁵ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], ‘50 niandai Xianggang wenxue de fuza wenhua beijing 50 年代香港文學的複雜文化背景 (The Complex Cultural Background of Hong Literature in the 1950s)’, in *Xianggang wenhua shilun* 香港文化十論 (*Ten Essays on Hong Kong Culture*) (Hangzhou 杭州: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe 浙江大學出版社 (Zhejiang University Press), 2012), 69–72.

¹²⁶ The 10 years between 1949 and 1959 were the initiation phase of the newly-established People’s Republic and allowed Hong Kong a period of independence. See Wang Jiancong 王劍叢, *Xianggang Wenxue Shi* 香港文學史 (*A History of Hong Kong Literature*), 1st ed. (Nanchang 南昌: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe 百花洲文藝出版社 (Baihuazhou Art and Literature Publishing House), 1995), 77–83. According to Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Hong Kong literature gradually revealed its true face during the 1950s. Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], and Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], *Xianggang xin wenxue nianbiao, 1950–1969 nian* 香港新文學年表, 1950–1969 年 (*A Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969*), 8. Besides modern literature there was also the experimental literature that emerged in the 1960s. See Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], ‘Xianggang xiaoshuo de zongji: wu, liushi niandai 香港小說的蹤跡——五、六十年代 (Traces of Hong Kong Novels: The 1950, 1960s)’, in *Zhuiji Xianggang wenxue* 追跡香港文學 (*In Search of Hong Kong Literature*), ed. Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], and Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], 1st ed., *Xianggang wenhua yanjiu congshu* (Hong Kong Cultural Studies Series) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23–25.

¹²⁷ The journal was published from March 3 1956 to May 1 1959, producing 15 issues in total, and closing down when Ma Lang left Hong Kong for the US. Lu Zhaoling 盧昭靈, ‘Wushi niandai de xiandaizhuyi yundong: “Wenyi Xinchao” de yiyi jiazhi 五十年代的現代主義運動——「文藝新潮」

Kong's modernist movement (*xiandaizhuyi yundong* 現代主義運動), related to the formalistic turn which Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 has mentioned in section 4.2.4. The modernist movement had, as the critic Chen Guoqiu 陳國球 states, a less far-reaching impact.¹²⁸

The southbound literati Ma Lang 馬朗 (pen name), or Ronald Mar (1933–), whose original name is Ma Boliang 馬博良, was a well-known editor and translator in Shanghai's literary scene when he was exiled to Hong Kong in 1951.¹²⁹ In Hong Kong Ma Lang benefitted from the laissez-faire liberalism of the British government, which tolerated moderate but not extreme leftist literary activity. In 1956 he launched the *Literary Current* to introduce modernist Western work and create a literary platform that was neither ideologically nor politically polluted by left or right. The title refers to the Shanghai literary journal *Literary Waves* (*Wenchao* 文潮), published during the 1940s, presumably hinting at the artistic ideal of modernism that Ma Lang wanted to pursue. Its support came from Global Publishing (*Huanqiu chubanshe* 環球出版社) and its publisher was Law Bun 羅斌, a friend of Ma Lang who adopted a politically neutral stance.¹³⁰

的意義和價值 (The Modernism Movement in the 1950s: The Significance and Value of *Literary Current*)', 11.

¹²⁸ Chen Guoqiu argues that it could hardly be called a conscious movement. Writers such as Ma Lang 馬朗, Kun Nan 崑南, and Li Yinghao 李英豪 put great effort into introducing modernist works, although the movement was very small and its scope therefore limited. Nonetheless one should not underestimate the cultural-political importance of its endeavour to launch a literary forum for modernism in colonial Hong Kong. Chen Guoqiu 陳國球, "'Qu zhengzhi" piping yu "guozu" Xiangxiang: Li Yinghao de wenxue piping yu Xianggang xiandaizhuyi yundong de wenhua zhengzhi 「去政治」批評與「國族」想像——李英豪的文學批評與香港現代主義運動的文化政治 (Criticizing "Non-Politics" and Imagining "Nationalism": Li Yinghao's Literary Criticism and the Cultural Politics of the Hong Kong Modernist Movement)', *Zuojia* 作家 (*Writer*) 41 (2005): 39–51.

¹²⁹ Ma Lang also spent many years studying and living the US and can therefore also be considered an overseas Chinese-American.

¹³⁰ Song, 'Translation, Cultural Politics, and Poetic Form: A Comparative Study of the Translation of Modernist Poetry in *Les Contemporains* (1932–35) and *Literary Currents* (1956–59)', 2015, 105. According to Ma Lang no external funding was allocated to the publication of *Literary Current*. Quite the opposite: it depended on writers who devoted themselves to the journal in their spare time and received no compensation unless they asked for it, in which case (as in the example given of Xu Xu 徐許 who could not afford to write for nothing, the editors paid them out of their own pockets). Ma Lang 馬朗 and Du Jiaqi 杜家祁, 'Weishenme shi "xiandaizhuyi"?': Du Jiaqi, Ma Lang duitan 為

During his years as an editor and translator for *Literary Current* Ma Lang acquired a strong reputation in his field. Looking back twenty years later, he opined that '*Literary Current* lit a torch that has been revived by Hong Kong's literature and art'.¹³¹ Certainly the southbound literati played a crucial role in promoting Western literature in Hong Kong in the 1950s. In particular, according to Lu Zhaoling, considering Ma Lang's absolute commitment to pushing Hong Kong's literature towards modernism: 'Ma Lang was not an expert in reviewing literary theory, nevertheless [in his role] as an editor he was good at planning and taking the lead. Several special editions and features of the *Literary Current* are both brilliant and outstanding; they have left an unforgettable impression on today's readers'.¹³² In a March 1956 issue of *Literary Current* Ma Lang offered a provoking invitation to the journal's readers: 'Engineers of the human soul, rally around our banner!' (*Renlei linghun de gonchengshi, dao women de qixia lai!* 人類靈魂的工程師，到我們的旗下來！), encouraging readers and writers, the 'engineers of the human soul', to step forward and finally pick the 'forbidden fruit' of paradise – a metaphor for the spirit of modernism. It is considered one of the important manifestos on Hong Kong's literature and art and attracted many young and local Hong Kong writers.¹³³ Against the backdrop of the left-right

甚麼是「現代主義」？——杜家祁，馬朗對談 (Why "Modernism"?: Conversation between Du Jiaqi and Ma Lang), *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*) 224 (2003): 21–31.

¹³¹ Lu Zhaoling 盧昭靈, 'Wushi niandai de xiandai zhuyi yundong: "Wenyi Xinchao" de yiyi jiazhi 五十年代的現代主義運動——「文藝新潮」的意義和價值 (The Modernism Movement in the 1950s: The Significance and Value of *Literary Current*)', 8. Ma Lang had mentioned the torch earlier in his manifesto. He calls on the people to look for the silver lining because although everyone was suffocating, one could see that the torch was about to shine out again. See Ma Lang 馬朗, 'Fakan ci: renlei linghun de gonchengshi, dao women de qixia lai! 發刊詞：人類靈魂的工程師，到我們的旗下來！ (Engineers of the Human Soul, Rally around Our Banner!)', *Wenyi xinchao* 文藝新潮 (*Literary Current*) 1, no. 1 (1956): 2.

¹³² Lu Zhaoling 盧昭靈, 5.

¹³³ Chen Guoqi 陳國球 *Xianggang de shuqing shi* 香港的抒情史 (*Hong Kong's History of Lyrics*) (Hong Kong: Xianggang zhongwen daxue 香港中文大學 (Hong Kong Chinese University Press), 2016), 136. It is disputable whether Ma Lang had Western modernism in mind at the time or simply wanted to introduce a new trend. See Ou Zhongtao 區仲桃, 'Shilun Ma Lang de xiandai zhuyi 試論馬朗的現代主義 (On Ma Lang's Modernism)', *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 (*Hong Kong Literature Study*) 10 (2010): 41.

struggle, the manifesto was also a call to speak freely and publish without constraints.¹³⁴

Ma Lang's manifesto consists of two paragraphs and begins with a description of the sweet and delicious forbidden fruit that can be found in paradise. The world has so much beauty to offer, and more than one paradise with this tasty fruit is supposed to exist in the world. Ma Lang asks:

Why is this a forbidden fruit? Is it we who are covering our own eyes? ... We are at the very forefront of tragedy and a new dark age is coming. A group of people who were once uneasy and confused [are now] fumbling, fighting and shouting in the turmoil of a world turned upside-down. We were once led to the slaughter, were again and again convinced that we had found the perfect paradise, and again and again we have been cheated, a trapped heart and the devil's path taking the place of the prospect of happiness.¹³⁵

Ma Lang describes a dark and gloomy period in history that the readers were witnessing at the time, although one should not shy away from exploring and should set off on the quest for the paradise. Ma Lang also speaks of a spark that can become a roaring flame as long as writers and readers do not give up hope. Ma Lang's manifesto was intended to encourage disillusioned members of the literary circles who had lost themselves in that dark era to seriously contemplate their future and try their best to find a way out – and a way into paradise.¹³⁶

When Ma Lang was asked in an interview in 2003 why he chose to promote modernism and no other movement, he replied that the title *Current* (*Xinchao* 新潮) in *Literary Current* (*Wenyi xinchao* 文藝新潮) refers to the

¹³⁴ Xu Xuwei 許旭筠, Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], and Lingnan daxue (Xianggang) 嶺南大學 (香港) (Lingnan University, Hong Kong), eds., *Shuxie Xianggang@wenxue gushi 書寫香港@文學故事 (Writing Hong Kong@Stories on Literature)* (Hong Kong: Xianggang jiaoyu tushu gongsi 香港教育圖書公司 (Hong Kong Educational Publishing Company), 2008), <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/213342991.html>.

¹³⁵ Ma Lang 馬朗, 'Fakan ci: renlei linghun de gonchenghshi, dao women de qixia lai! 發刊詞: 人類靈魂的工程師, 到我們的旗下來! (Engineers of the Human Soul, Rally around Our Banner!)'. The first line of the title 'Engineers of the human soul, rally around our banner!' is by Joseph Stalin, who used it to address writers and cultural workers.

¹³⁶ Chen Zhide 陳智德, *Di wen zhi: zhuyi Xianggang difang yu wenxue 地文誌: 追憶香港地方與文學 (Geography: Recalling Hong Kong Places and Literature)*, 1st ed. (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi 聯經出版公司 (Linking Publishing Company), 2013), 73.

journal's focus on works of modernism. He wanted not only to illustrate the continuance of new trends of modern poetry from the forties but also to introduce a new generation of existentialist, surrealist and cubist literary and art works to the readers. It also seems that promoting modernism was a way of appearing politically neutral, and Ma Lang notes that among all of the left- and right-wing publications the *Literary Current* was 'wedged' between the two camps and took no political position.¹³⁷ Ma Lang had been a left-leaning writer when he lived on the Mainland, but that had changed, as Song Zijiang asserts, '[since he] thought little of left-wing and right-wing literature in Hong Kong, he believed modernism to be the only literary space that could help the "mechanics of the human soul" to disassociate from the political struggle and prevent themselves from becoming "naked primitive men"'.¹³⁸ However, a deeper look at the selection of works which Ma Lang translated reveals that there might have been another reason for Ma Lang's attraction to French existentialist fiction. A 2001 paper by Yau Wai Ping, 'Literary Translation in Hong Kong in the 1950s: Ma Lang's Translation of *Erostratus* published in *Literary Current*, argues that against the backdrop of the prevailing socialist realism in Mainland China, Ma Lang was interested in the image of the protagonist as an individual who is able to question and challenge the roles and values prescribed by society. Moreover, his translation of French existentialist work '[offered] an alternative to the individual's subordination to society as sanctioned by the Chinese Communist Party'. In Yau's opinion Ma Lang generated a version of the self that was contrary to what was being promoted in China at the time. Also, because Ma Lang refers in

¹³⁷ Ma Lang 馬朗 and Du Jiaqi 杜家祁, 'Weihshenme shi xiandai zhuyi? : Du Jiaqi, Ma Lang duitan 為什麼是「現代主義」? ——杜家祁, 馬朗對談 (Why Modernism?: Conversation between Tu Jiaqi and Ma Lang)', 27, 31; Lu Zaholing 盧昭靈, 'Wushi niandai de xiandai zhuyi yundong: "wenyi xinchao" de yiyi jiazhi 五十年代的現代主義運動——「文藝新潮」的意義和價值 (The Modernism Movement in the 1950s: The Significance and Value of *Literary Current*)', 11.

¹³⁸ Song, 'Translation, Cultural Politics, and Poetic Form: A Comparative Study of the Translation of Modernist Poetry in *Les Contemporains* (1932–35) and *Literary Currents* (1956–59)', 2015, 108f. 'Mechanics of the human soul' is a variant translation of the aforementioned title 'Engineers of the human soul. The line 'naked primitive men' is from Ma Lang's poem, 'The drifters who burnt the lute' (*fenqin the langzi 焚琴的浪子*), published in the first issue of *Literary Current* and the title of his book of poems.

a note in the translation of 'Erostratus' to Lu Xun, who was seen as the role model for socialist realism in China, Yau asserts that 'the image of the protagonist as an individual who can reject what is commonly regarded as unquestionable is in fact a feature of *Erostratus* that Ma Lang emphasizes in the translator's note'. Yau sees that when comparing Sartre's *Erostratus* and Lu Xun's *The True Story of Ah Q*, both share the theme of society's complacency and implied social criticism.¹³⁹

Literary Current had a significant impact on Hong Kong's literary scene, particularly due to Ma Lang's huge and determined effort. It influenced journals such as *New Intellectual Tide* (*Xin Sichao* 新思潮), and *Cape of Good Hope* (*Hao Wangjiao* 好望角) from Hong Kong, and *Pen* (*Bi Hui* 筆匯) from Taiwan. The latter did not appear in Taiwan while it was in publication, but later created a tremendous impact with the introduction of prominent writers such as Li Weiling 李維陵 and Kun Nan 崑南.¹⁴⁰

4.4 Historical background to Hong Kong cinema

The cultural status of Hong Kong cinema during the 1950s was much the same as that of its literature and therefore was prone to being defined as left- or right-wing, in particular during the Cold War era. Luo Guixiang 羅貴祥 [Lo Kwai-cheung] points out that '[f]ollowing the practice of playing the role of middleman during the expansion of European powers in Asia since the nineteenth century, the Hong Kong film industry under (overseas) Chinese entrepreneurs continued to function as compradors not just between Western colonizers and native consumers ... but also between Chinese leftist and right-wing groups in the 1950s'.¹⁴¹ It is hard to discern which ideological camp film-makers and companies

¹³⁹ Wai Ping Yau, 'Literary Translations in Hong Kong in the 1950s: Ma Lang's Translation *Erostratus* in *Literary Current Monthly Magazine*', 21f., 32, 33.

¹⁴⁰ Lu Zhaoling 盧昭靈, 'Wushi niandai de xiandai zhuyi yundong: "wenyi xinchao" de yiyi jiazhi 五十年代的現代主義運動——「文藝新潮」的意義和價值 (The Modernism Movement in the 1950s: The Significance and Value of *Literary Current*)', 26.

¹⁴¹ Kwai-cheung Lo, 'Hong Kong Cinema as Ethnic Borderland', in *A Companion to Hong Kong Cinema*, ed. Esther M. K. Cheung, Wiley-Blackwell Companions to National Cinemas (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 80. In spite the political camps, the Hong Kong filmmakers and film industry were nonetheless economic-oriented, for which reason 'filmmakers accepted their

were siding with due to the unprecedented socio-political and economic circumstances to which they were exposed. As Law Kar puts it, 'the political orientations of these talented [filmmakers] cannot be determined one way or the other ... They were motivated by pure business matters, i.e. the depressing state of the industry in Shanghai and the Civil War'.¹⁴² The two opposing ideological camps had also played an important role when speaking about Hong Kong cinema: '[f]ollowing the end of the Second World War, the Cold War prevailed in the world. On the Mainland all-out civil war broke out between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang Party. Hong Kong was naturally affected and its society exhibited the strains of the division between left and right'. The intellectuals in exile were contributing to that division, as Hu Ke observes: '[m]any Mainlanders fled to Hong Kong, bringing their ideological divisions, exacerbating the already divisive situation in Hong Kong'.¹⁴³ The migrant intellectuals had to build a new life, since they could not continue what they had left behind on the Mainland, as 'filmmakers forced into exile and having to become pioneers all over again in establishing a Mandarin-language film industry and the tinkering and "cover-up" of the history of this period'.¹⁴⁴

In studying the connecting link between Hong Kong and the Mainland it is interesting to look at the dividing line between right and left and beyond. Mainland leftist cinema of the 1930s and 1940s had left a profound influence on post-1949 Hong Kong cinema. It created a strong and intimate bond linking the territory with China, as Hu Ke states: 'Hong Kong's leftist cinema had countless ties with China in social, cinematic and people-to-people relationships'. The seeds of left-wing cinema were planted when filmmakers migrated to Hong Kong

dependent position not from sheer ideological commitment but mainly for economic goals and personal reasons'. It was also not uncommon for pro-Communist and pro-Nationalist film companies to collaborate as both would benefit economically from their cooperation. See Lo, 80f.

¹⁴² Law Kar, 'The Shadow of Tradition and the Left-Right Struggle', in *The China Factor in Hong Kong Cinema (Xianggang dianying de Zhongguo mailuo)*, (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1997), 16.

¹⁴³ Ke Hu, 'Hong Kong Cinema in the Chinese Mainland (1949–1979)', in *Border Crossings in Hong Kong Cinema (Kuajie de Xianggang dianying 12.-27.4.2000): The 24th Hong Kong International Film Festival*, Hong Kong Cinema Retrospective (Hong Kong: Leisure and Cultural Services Department, 2000), 18.

¹⁴⁴ Law Kar, 'The Shadow of Tradition and the Left-Right Struggle', 15.

during the 1930s during the War of Resistance.¹⁴⁵ As a result of this wave of migration a series of progressive films and War-of-Resistance films were produced. Their makers '[infused] the style of Shanghai cinema into Hong Kong pictures which contained their own distinctive quality'.¹⁴⁶ As mentioned, it is difficult to assign – migrant intellectuals to defined categories, but Tan Chunfa makes out two tendencies among the left-wing artists: firstly 'the "Wider Left", which consisted of filmmakers who supported "anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism" as a common objective in the cultural movement of the Chinese cinema, and secondly the "Narrow Left" which consisted of leaders and organizers of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal policy line'.¹⁴⁷ As Law Kar points out: '[i]n the early '50s the leftist tendency seemed to be the main trend in Hong Kong cinema, whether harbouring idealistic sentiments towards the birth of "a new China" or focusing on vested economic interests'. In fact 'the great majority of studios in the early '50s tended to the left in terms of ideological expression. This was certainly true of works in which the ideological thrust was anti-feudalism, anti-old society, and rejection of capitalism'.¹⁴⁸ Although the US played a chief role in terms of financial aid during the Cold War, as Law Kar observes, after 1949 when the PRC was created it did not stop supporting the regime in exile, even extending its funding to the exiles in Hong Kong, with the motives of containing communism in the widest sense and strengthening the acceptance of American values and interests in Asia.

4.4.1 *Chinese and Hong Kong Cinema from the 1920s to the 1950s*

Chinese cinema of the 1920s was, according to Tony Rayns, enormously influenced by imported American films: 80 to 90 per cent of all films shown in China or Hong Kong in the 1920s were from the US and other foreign countries;

¹⁴⁵ War of Resistance is another term for the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945).

¹⁴⁶ Hu, 'Hong Kong Cinema in the Chinese Mainland (1949–1979)', 18–19.

¹⁴⁷ Tan Chunfa, 'The Influx of Shanghai Filmmakers into Hong Kong and Hong Kong Cinema', in *Cinema of Two Cities Xianggang – Shanghai (Dianying shuangcheng)*, 25.3–9.4.1994 (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1994), 75.

¹⁴⁸ Kar Law, "Epilogue : Retrospection, Reflection, and Doubts," in *Cinema of Two Cities Xianggang-Shanghai (Dianying shuangcheng 25.3-9.4.1994)*, (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1994), 103.

the Chinese film market was comparatively small at the time. Not until the 1930s did the latter start to flourish; the years from 1931 to 1937 are known as the Golden Age of Chinese Cinema when a new wave of directors and actors entered the film market and established a new film culture. There was a gap between 1937 and 1946 during which, according to Rayns, nothing happened and Chinese cinema stagnated. Rayns sees a link connecting Shanghai cinema of the 1930s with Shanghai and Hong Kong films of the 1940s, a period when cinema improved significantly and 'Chinese cinema [jumped] from an excitable and impetuous adolescence to a comparatively staid middle-aged maturity',¹⁴⁹ as 'a political continuity that runs through left-leaning films in the Shanghai of the 30s and late 40s and the Hong Kong of the late 40s and 50s' reflecting a 'need for their political concerns to be disguised or in some way coded. Most of the disguising and coding, however, takes place at the level of content, not in the areas of visual style, acting or film language'.¹⁵⁰

According to Stephen Teo and Hu Ke, the topic of films changed after 1949 and the end of the civil war between the CCP and the Nationalist Party with the victory of the Communist Party, when many of the intellectuals realized that their exile in Hong Kong had become permanent, affecting their choice of film topic and settings. Law Wai-Ming observes that the majority of filmmakers who sought refuge in Hong Kong the 1940s and 1950s 'possessed something of a sojourner mentality with respect to life in Hong Kong'.¹⁵¹ At the same time, according to Stephen Teo, prior to 1949 they did not consider films to be set in Hong Kong, and by 'shying away from realist depictions of Hong Kong society' they expressed their unfamiliarity with the territory. In the 1950s the focus finally shifted to Hong Kong, and many films were made about tackling the problems of daily life

¹⁴⁹ Tony Rayns, 'Chinese Cinema in Shanghai and Hong Kong from the 1930s to the 1940s', in *Early Images of Hong Kong and China (Zaoqi Xianggang Zhongguo yingxiang)* (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1995), 106.

¹⁵⁰ Rayns, 110.

¹⁵¹ Wai-ming Law, 'Old Images of Two Cities: The Position of Mandarin Cinema in 1950s Hong Kong', in *Cinema of Two Cities (Xianggang-Shanghai dianying shuangcheng 25.3-9.4.1994)*, (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1994), 37.

in the colonial city.¹⁵² Hu Ke considers the social realist film the most important genre among the Hong Kong movies of the 1950s and 1960s introduced into China.¹⁵³ Shanghai and Hong Kong are often demarcated in terms of language and setting: '[i]n the addition to the selection of themes for films, most of which related to China's history, it appears that even in terms of social realism the border between Shanghai and Hong Kong was clearly delineated'.¹⁵⁴ These movies depicted contemporary Hong Kong society and described the lives of ordinary people. Satirical attacks on particular people were not permitted due to the class theory pursued in Mainland China. According to Hu Ke, Hong Kong cinema produced 'pictures that combined a realist style with social critique' that was lacking on the Mainland. As a result, 'Mainland audiences were surprised and refreshed by the critical attitudes of Hong Kong films, exposing the dark side of social contradictions and portraying cruelty in society'; Mainland films usually avoided 'social criticism and the portrayal of the more unsavoury aspects of society'.¹⁵⁵

Besides social realism, other political, social, and geopolitical themes and functions can be connected to Hong Kong movies. For instance political changes had a strong impact on the development of Hong Kong cinema; films were used as tools and had great propaganda value for the authorities. As Law Kar observes, the film industry was clearly divided into two political camps controlling the market: '[t]he Hong Kong government exercised some control over the propaganda exercises of both the right and the left'. Leftist and rightist cinema had different purposes and impacts: leftist cinema was less propagandistic, unable to rely solely on the Mainland market, and the film companies had to compete within Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.¹⁵⁶ The two film studios Motion

¹⁵² Stephen Teo, 'The Shanghai Hangover: The Early Years of Mandarin Cinema in Hong Kong', in *Cinema of Two Cities (Xianggang-Shanghai Dianying shuangcheng 25.3-9.4.1994)*, (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1994), 17.

¹⁵³ Hu, 'Hong Kong Cinema in the Chinese Mainland (1949-1979)', 20.

¹⁵⁴ Law, 'Old Images of Two Cities: The Position of Mandarin Cinema in 1950s Hong Kong', 37.

¹⁵⁵ Hu, 'Hong Kong Cinema in the Chinese Mainland (1949-1979)', 21.

¹⁵⁶ Unlike one or two pro-Beijing film companies, they all targeted the Hong Kong market and the Chinese diaspora in Southeast China. In spite of all its efforts the Hong Kong Mandarin cinema industry was suffering a crisis by the mid-1950s. Poshek Fu, 'Modernity, Diasporic Capital, and

Pictures and General Investment (MP&GI), later renamed the Cathay Organization, and Shaw Brothers, established in 1956 and 1958 respectively, dominated the post-war Hong Kong film scene and had great success distributing films to Southeast Asian theatres.¹⁵⁷ To attract and satisfy a wider audience many companies decided to emphasize the entertainment aspect and focused on depictions of modern life. For instance MP&GI produced many musicals and a series of urban romances. As Christophe Falin points out:

It has to be a positive image of Hong Kong. The film must show the benefits of consumer society and the leisure activities that are defined by the British. Progress and well-being, material comfort and the urban lifestyle constitute the frame story of these films, set inside apartments or in offices which are modelled after the American lifestyle. And with the characters, despite coming from a modest background, finding their place in the new society, often taking 'white-collar' jobs.¹⁵⁸

Rightist cinema, on the other hand, 'had to placate the Kuomintang government's own united front policy in order to gain entry into the Taiwan market. There was an emphasis on entertainment with a moral subtext, bringing out the message of unity and underlining the harmonious relationship between the Mainlander-exiles and the Taiwanese natives'. There was also a strong aspiration to democracy and freedom in both camps. Even so democracy in the Hong Kong of the 1950s was rather a luxury and a goal still to strive for, as 'both "leftist" and "rightist" cultural workers from the Mainland were loudly clamouring for people to fight for "democracy" in the territory, although it was the latter who were the more vocal'.¹⁵⁹

The US, as one of the superpowers involved in the Cold War, played a pivotal role in Asia supporting and subsidizing both Hong Kong and Taiwan in

1950's Hong Kong Mandarin Cinema', *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media* 49 (2007), <https://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc49.2007/Poshek/>.

¹⁵⁷ Christophe Falin, *Shanghai, Hong Kong: villes de cinéma* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2014), 36–39.

¹⁵⁸ See Falin, 82f.

¹⁵⁹ Kar Law, 'Crisis and Opportunity: Crossing Borders in Hong Kong Cinema, Its Development from the 40s to 70s', in *Border Crossings in Hong Kong Cinema* (Kuajie de Xianggang dianying 12.-27.4.2000): The 24th Hong Kong International Film Festival), Hong Kong Cinema Retrospective (Hong Kong: Leisure and Cultural Services Department, 2000), 119.

financial matters. 'The US Government, along with its support of the KMT regime, had given financial grants to support artists and cultural workers. When the Mainland fell to the Communists, the US continued to support the regime-in-exile in Taiwan, but also extended their largesse to "exiles" in Hong Kong'. Its motives were obvious: 'to propagate notions of "freedom" and American culture, to oppose communism and strengthen American interests and influence in South-East Asia'.¹⁶⁰ In fact 'such blatant American "imperialism" had the effect of restoring balance to the China-Taiwan-Hong Kong power relationships. In Hong Kong it served to bolster the growing consciousness of democracy and freedom'.¹⁶¹ On the political level, the call for and sense of unity had been very strong since the 1920s and lasted until the late 1950s, as depicted in the film *Half Way Down* (*Ban Xialiu Shehui* 半下流社會) (1955), directed by Tu Guangqi 屠光啟. Such 'tenement' drama was commonly the topic of the left-wing film studios 'presenting tradition as positive nationalism and modernization as the great urge of all Chinese'. Stephen Teo observes that these films 'made use of slum settings and centred around communities dealing with the hardship of surviving in dire economic circumstances. At the end there is an affirmation of unity and purpose – to survive and carry on the struggle'. For instance *Half Way Down* shows a group of intellectuals living in a refugee community in Hong Kong's Rennie's Mil (*Diaojingling* 調景嶺) [*Tiu Keng Leng*] resettlement centre, which is also inhabited by Chinese soldiers and low-ranking Nationalist Party officials. The film, adapted from a novel by Zhao Zifan 趙滋番, carries a strong nationalistic message: '[t]he characters are imbued with the spirit of exile: a professor carries a pouch of Chinese earth on his body. Such behaviour conforms to the standard

¹⁶⁰ Law Kar, Frank Bren, and Sam Ho, *Hong Kong Cinema: A Cross-Cultural View* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 155.

¹⁶¹ Law Kar, 'The Shadow of Tradition and the Left-Right Struggle', 17. Chi-Kwan Mark points out that 'to decision-makers in Washington, the Chinese refugees were an important instrument of the Cold War: a symbol of repudiation of communism, a source of intelligence on the mainland, and experts in the production of Chinese-language propaganda material'. See Mark, 'The "Problem of People"', 1180.

Nationalist slogan about “recovering the Mainland”, a slogan which underpins the propaganda message of the film’.¹⁶²

The cinema movement was strongly carried by the spirit of the left-wing camp, especially during the period of anti-Japanese resistance with the Japanese invasion of China and the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War; these events triggered a strong need to save the nation. Situ Huimin, a director and film technician of the leftist cinema movement, considered the spirit of the Left the most important aspect of the movement, emphasizing that ‘at that time, our art was at the service of politics, and the politics of the time was to fight the Japanese and save the nation. In Shanghai, this was what we did and when the Japanese drove us out of Shanghai, we continued to struggle in Hong Kong and never abandoned the spirit of the left cinema movement’.¹⁶³

In the 1920s before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War family dramas in which the family served as a mirror reflecting society with an emphasis on family bonds and moral ethics were very common. These dramas culminated in a big family reunion showing the film-makers’ critical stand towards society on the one hand, and their idealistic and spiritual beliefs on the other.¹⁶⁴

The years from 1932 to 1937 marked the beginning of didactic cinema, which, according to Tan Chunfa, can be considered a result of the anti-Japanese struggle. In the late 1930s and early 1940s didactic cinema became the leading genre in Hong Kong cinema, and it remained mainstream until the 1960s. Shanghai film émigrés evolved and established didactic cinema in Hong Kong when they recognized cinema as an ideological medium and ‘injected ideological elements into Hong Kong films, pointed the camera towards society and the people, and treated art in a sombre and realistic manner’.¹⁶⁵ In general didactic cinema conveys an ideological message to the audience using ‘subtle and

¹⁶² Teo, ‘The Shanghai Hangover: The Early Years of Mandarin Cinema in Hong Kong’, 22. This film is also considered a movie by ‘freedom filmmakers’ (*ziyou yingren* 自由影人) whose agenda was to promote ‘the Nationalist anti-communist cause as well as promoting Chinese Confucian tradition ... in Hong Kong and other Chinese communities around the globe’. See Fu, ‘Modernity, Diasporic Capital, and 1950’s Hong Kong Mandarin Cinema’.

¹⁶³ Tan Chunfa, ‘The Influx of Shanghai Filmmakers into Hong Kong and Hong Kong Cinema’, 76.

¹⁶⁴ Tan Chunfa, 78.

¹⁶⁵ Tan Chunfa, 80.

imperceptible methods to influence the thinking and ideology of the cinema masses and [presenting] unique political, ideological and moral hues on the screen'. The Shanghai film émigrés also put didactic film on their agenda for Chinese cinema as a tool for safeguarding the nation, particularly for Hong Kong: '[t]he genre suited the cultural environment of the time [late 1930s to early 1940s]. The cry of the cultural intelligentsia then was for cinema to produce meaningful and correct films which were needed by the masses; to exert the utmost effort in the great task of saving the nation'.¹⁶⁶ While box offices required movies to be entertaining, they also carried messages about social conscience, as Stephen Teo observes. Directors alternated between entertainment and didactic films. Despite their left or right ideology most films carried a didactic message reflecting the political circumstances of their time. Hong Kong was 'not the affluent society in the 50s and 60s it would later become in the 70s and 80s. China was politically unstable – the country preyed on the minds of Hong Kong people, many of whom were refugees who had fled the Mainland but who nevertheless still felt a patriotic attachment'.¹⁶⁷

Didactical and patriotic sentiments were not the only attitudes expressed in films: moral and traditional Chinese values were also dominating the minds of the émigrés, who promoted them to a wider audience. Moral values such as filial piety were strongly advocated, as in the movie *A Hymn to Mother* directed by Chu Kea (1956). The family was essential by reason of the exiles' distinctive status, as Ng Ho asserts: '[p]ursuing work or a career in a strange place with no friends or relatives around, the refugees could only rely on the family for emotional sustenance'.¹⁶⁸

Modernization and urbanization were emerging in Hong Kong in the 1950s, and were reflected in the cinema, facilitating an emphasis on moral

¹⁶⁶ Tan Chunfa, 81.

¹⁶⁷ Teo, 'The Shanghai Hangover: The Early Years of Mandarin Cinema in Hong Kong', 19f.

¹⁶⁸ Ho Ng, ed., 'Thoughts on "Boundaries"', in *Fifty Years of Electric Shadows (Guangying binfen wushi nian: Xianggang dianying huigu zhuanji)*, Hong Kong Cinema Retrospective (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1997), 50.

standards.¹⁶⁹ Law Kar notes that the right-wing films of the mid-1950s in particular showed the cultural and intellectual exiles' rejection of a society that was becoming capitalist under colonial rule as an ethical-moral reaction: '[i]t was as if [the exiles] had projections of a capitalist/colonialist society subjugating and eventually destroying the morals and ethical precepts of their traditional realm'.¹⁷⁰ Promoting these values in the left-wing films was also in line with the interest of the audience on the Mainland, as Hu Ke puts it:

The guideline of 'directing people to the good' in Hong Kong's leftist cinema was quite appropriate for the Mainland audience. It was strong on human sentiment and humanitarian precepts and also evoked traditional morality. Such conservative tendencies were suited to the moral precepts of the common people on the Mainland ... Ordinarily, Hong Kong filmmakers would transform the class issue into a moral issue, which was forbidden on the Mainland.¹⁷¹

Films advocating strong moral family values included *She Swallowed Her Sorrows* (1956/1957, Great Wall); *A Widow's Tears* (1957, Great Wall); *Tears of Filial Piety* (1960, Guanyi); *In the Age of Blooming Teen* (1959/1962, and Fenghuang), *Return of the Prodigal Youth* (1958/1962).¹⁷² All in all, the cinema served not just as a very important entertainment platform for refugee communities but also, and more importantly, as the 'chief medium linking the community with the motherland, bringing spiritual and emotional solace'.¹⁷³ As Law Wai-ming observes, this bond lasted for quite a while, created and strengthened chiefly by magazines: '[t]his close affinity to their former homeland continued until the 60s among the older generations of artists. For example, magazines such as *Mingbao yuekan* (*Ming Pao Monthly*) catered to their nostalgia for the land they had left'.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], ed., 'From Cities in Hong Kong to Hong Kong Films about Cities', in *Fifty Years of Electric Shadow* (*Guangying binfen wushi nian: Xianggang dianyinghui gu zhuanti*), Hong Kong Cinema Retrospective (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1997), 29.

¹⁷⁰ Law Kar, 'The Shadow of Tradition and the Left-Right Struggle', 20.

¹⁷¹ Hu, 'Hong Kong Cinema in the Chinese Mainland (1949-1979)', 22.

¹⁷² Hu, 22.

¹⁷³ Law, 'Crisis and Opportunity: Crossing Borders in Hong Kong Cinema, Its Development from the 40s to 70s', 116.

¹⁷⁴ Law, 'Old Images of Two Cities: The Position of Mandarin Cinema in 1950s Hong Kong', 37.

The sense of exile not only triggered a strong feeling of nostalgia for the motherland¹⁷⁵ but also evoked a cultural nationalism and chauvinism that Stephen Teo considers part of the Shanghai filmmakers' legacy to Hong Kong cinema.¹⁷⁶ Law Wai-ming concludes that 'cultural chauvinism is in fact a natural thing. A person's individual experience and habits of thought cannot be changed overnight, even though one has moved to a new place. What is more, Hong Kong was at that time still steeped in Chinese nationalist sentiment; its acceptance of Mandarin-speaking culture was a sign of loyalty to that nationalism'.¹⁷⁷

While several magazines prompted a feeling of nostalgia, film reviews in particular enhanced the quality and level of the audience's appreciation, as Grace Ng 吳詠恩 observes in her article 'The Southbound Filmmakers and the Reviews of Cantonese Films', which analyses the development of between film reviews and their strong impact on films. Leftist newspaper supplements had a strong influence on the films themselves; and film theories contributed to the development of the audience's critical view and played a significant role in propagating the cultural and linguistic value of Cantonese films.¹⁷⁸ Regardless of their style, length or content, these film critiques were very popular and were at their most influential in the 1940s and 1950s and until the end of the 1960s.¹⁷⁹ Two publications were of great theoretical significance: Cai Chushen's 蔡楚生 *On Cantonese Movies* (*Guanyu Yueyu dianying* 關於粵語電影) and Ye Ge's 耶戈 (pen name *Sima Wensen* 司馬文森) *On the Problem of National style in Cantonese Movies* (*Yueyu dianying de minzu fengge wenti* 粵語電影的民族風格問題).¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ Teo, 'The Shanghai Hangover: The Early Years of Mandarin Cinema in Hong Kong', 23.

¹⁷⁶ Teo, 21.

¹⁷⁷ Law, 'Old Images of Two Cities: The Position of Mandarin Cinema in 1950s Hong Kong', 37f.

¹⁷⁸ Wu Yong'en 吳詠恩, 'Nanlai yingren yu yueyu dianying pinglun 南來影人與粵語電影評論 (Discussion of Southbound Filmmakers and Cantonese Movies)', 101.

¹⁷⁹ Wu Yong'en 吳詠恩, 106.

¹⁸⁰ Cai Chusheng 蔡楚生, 'Guanyu yueyu dianying 關於粵語電影 (On Cantonese Movies)', *Dagong bao* 大公報 (*Ta Kung Pao*), 1949; Ye Ge 耶戈, 'Yueyu dianying de minzu fengge wenti 粵語電影的民族風格問題 (The National Style in Cantonese Movies)', *Dagong bao* 大公報 (*Ta Kung Pao*), 1949.

Filmmakers such as Cai Chusheng 蔡楚生, from Guangdong, emphasizes his devotion to films in Cantonese and sees their tremendous cultural value due to their ability to reflect human history and geography:

Long-standing human geography shapes the dialect of a place. Cantonese has a long history that by no means can be assimilated in the short term, and neither can it be cut down in a short time period. As a principal task, every art and culture should have the ability to reach out to the general public.¹⁸¹

Hong Kong cinema in the 1950s included films in the exile genre, which were mostly melodramatic and loaded with pictures of war and chaos. Ng Ho notices that these films show ‘characters scattered by war and turbulence, the women fallen into depravity, the men plagued by sickness and a roving existence’.¹⁸² Although there were surprisingly few films dealing with the topic of exile, the Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) tracked down three such that can be considered representative: *New Song of the Fishermen* (1954), *Half-Way Down* (1955), and *14,000 Witnesses* (1960).¹⁸³

4.4.2 *Coming-of-age films*

Apart from the exile movies, the image of youth was strongly represented in the movies of the 1950s and 1960s in China.¹⁸⁴ It also served as a vehicle for didactic and moral messages in 1950s Hong Kong. One can witness the emergence of coming-of-age films centring on the growth and life of a young protagonist under harsh conditions. Unlike many Mainland movies that include ‘youth’ (*qingnian* 青年 or *qingchun* 青春) in their titles, Hong Kong coming-of-age films can generally be divided into three thematic categories. The first focuses on the growth of a young protagonist, such as *The Kid* (*Xiluxiang* 細路祥, 1950), *Infancy* (*Ren zhi chu*

¹⁸¹ Cai Chusheng 蔡楚生, ‘Guanyu yueyu dianying 關於粵語電影 (On Cantonese Movies)’.

¹⁸² Ng, ‘Exile, a Story of Love and Hate’, 38.

¹⁸³ Ng, 39.

¹⁸⁴ Xueping, “‘Long Live Youth’ and the Ironies of Youth and Gender in Chinese Films of the 1950s and 1960s’.

人之初) (1951), and *Aren't the Kids Lovely* (*Ernü jing* 兒女經) (1953).¹⁸⁵ Second, the story is about the coming of age of an orphan or adopted child, as in *Orphan's Song* (*Guer xing* 孤兒行) (1955) *An Orphan's Tragedy* (*Guxing xuelei* 孤星血淚) (1955),¹⁸⁶ *Mambo Girl* (*Manbo nülan* 曼波女郎) (1957), and *The Orphan* (*Renhai guhong* 人海孤鴻) (1960). The last category depicts the relationship between parent and child, such as in *Blame it on the Father* (*Fu zhi guo* 父之過) (1953), *Parents' Love* (*Cuncao xin* 寸草心) (1953), *A Son is Born* (*Fuhai mingdeng* 苦海明燈) (1953), *Father and Son* (*Fu yu zi* 父與子) (1954), *Loves of the Youngsters* (*Da ernü jing* 大兒女經) (1955), and *Parents' Hearts* (*Fumu xin* 父母心) (1955).¹⁸⁷ These coming-of-age pictures convey a clear moral message and were produced for didactic purposes. The plot usually centres around a young person who has strayed from the right path and is trying to find his or her way back into society. A morally superior character such as a teacher or tutor is commonly included, who guides and instruct the protagonist. Besides the teacher-disciple relationship some films address the parent as a role model and deal with the broad topic of how to raise children to become well-behaved, diligent and devoted human beings. At this point the film *Aren't the Kids lovely* (1953), for instance, uses a plant as a metaphor to convey the message that any living entity relies on outside influences to grow up beautiful and strong. Some of the films include a comparison of different life paths and explore the protagonists' possible outcomes if they had been raised in a contrasting (rich/poor; well-educated/bottom of society) social environment. Another very common subject of 1950s Hong Kong films is the orphan or adopted child searching for her or his lost identity and the mother or father who abandoned the child soon after birth.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ See for plot synopsis: Winnie Fu, ed., *Hong Kong Filmography, Vol. III: 1950–1952* (*Xianggang yingpian daquan disan juan 1950–1952*), Hong Kong Filmography 3 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2000), 76, 245; Ching-ling Kwok, ed., *Hong Kong Filmography, Vol. IV: 1953–1959*, Hong Kong Filmography 4 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive, 2003), 2.

¹⁸⁶ The film “An Orphan’s Tragedy” is based on Charles Dicken’s coming-of-age novel *Great Expectations*.

¹⁸⁷ For plot synopsis see Kwok, *Hong Kong Filmography, Vol. IV*, 17, 27, 92, 95, 120.

¹⁸⁸ Bruce Lee 李小龍 (born in 1940) was a young boy when he played the leading part in many of these films.

Summary

The cultural landscape of Hong Kong was shaped in many ways by émigré intellectuals from Mainland China. The image of Hong Kong that they created, both in their minds and on paper, often stands in sharp contrast to that of the Mainland which shows a hidden elitism. The left-wing-right-wing struggle drove a wedge between writers and turned Hong Kong's cultural and literary field into an ideological battlefield which only a few literati were able to ignore or escape from. The link between Shanghai and Hong Kong originated from a comparative and conflicting perspective, that of a cultural centre versus a cultural desert. From the intellectuals' point of view the colonial city was located both geographically and culturally at the margins of China. Nonetheless, during the late 1940s and early 1950s many writers chose to leave their homeland due to the political climate and in spite of their bias against Hong Kong, installed themselves in the British colony. Despite many difficulties and hardships adapting to the city, their determined efforts helped to shape Hong Kong's cultural space. The cultural and literary field of 1950s Hong Kong is chiefly characterized by the work and writings of these migrant writers, who in turn benefitted from Hong Kong's unique and liberal space on the one hand and greenback funding on the other hand, all generating fertile ground for genres such as migrant, modern, pulp and Hong Kong literature.

5 NORTHBOUND OR SOUTHBOUND?

最好的桃花只開放在越秀山，
沒有女孩子能得到我愛情因為我已給你，
縱予我以所羅門王的寶藏，
我也不願把故國鄉土遺棄。
請守候來自南方的舊燕再棲息在你的屋樑，
今天我要把最熱烈的思念向北方遙寄。

— [力匡：遙寄 1953]¹

The best peach blossoms only flower on the Yuexiu Mountain,
No girl can have my love because I have given it to you,
Even if I was given King Solomon's treasure
I still would not want to leave my native land.
Please wait for the old Yan from the south to rest in your roof beam,
Today I send my most ardent longing to the north.

— Li Kuang: Mail to the distance
(1953)

The migrant flows triggered by the socio-political events of the first half of the twentieth century had a significant effect on the British colony of Hong Kong and brought major changes in its literary and publishing fields in the 1950s. In Hong Kong literary history there is a growing body of Chinese-language

¹ Li Kuang 力匡, Xiahou Wuji 夏侯無忌, and Yi Zhi 易知, 'Zuguo sanchang: (yi) yaoji; (er) Jiangnan; (san) xinnian 祖國三唱: (一) 遙寄; (二) 江南; (三) 信念 (Three Songs on the Motherland: (1) Mail to the Distance; (2) South of the (Yangtze) River, (3) Belief)', *Renren wenxue 人人文學 (Everyman's Literature)*, no. 6 (24 February 1953): 60–61.

scholarly literature on the southbound literati and their role in 1950s Hong Kong. This chapter examines the southbound literati who emigrated to Hong Kong into what many of them saw as temporary exile, highlighting their cultural background and status and their perceptions as sojourners and migrants in colonial Hong Kong. It also shows that in their minds and hearts they were still closely connected to their homeland and aimed to promote Chinese culture at the periphery of China. The homeland, symbolized in nostalgic memories, is a recurring *leitmotif* in their work. In this regard, Shanghai served as counterpart and ‘carbon copy’ of Hong Kong. In Hong Kong the émigrés experienced a ‘double marginalization’, although they were able to rise in status in the publishing field and acquired a considerable reputation as southbound writers (*nanlai zuojia* 南來作家).

5.1 Southbound literati in Southeast Asia: Their hearts belonged to China

The majority of the migrant intellectuals who fled the post-1949 Communist regime headed south, mainly to Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. To accompany an exhibition held in 2000 the National Library of Singapore published a volume titled *Songs of the South: Research Materials on Chinese Authors in Singapore, 1920–1965*, presenting information on the lives and writing of the almost 150 southbound writers who settled in Singapore, including handwritten manuscripts, photographs, and notes introducing or evaluating their work. In the preface to the volume the editor, Luo Ming, director of the Art and Literature Institute in Singapore (*Xinjiabo wenyi banhui* 新加坡文藝班會) defines these southbound literati as ‘writers from China who once worked and lived in Singapore and Malaysia; and then returned to China or became residents or citizens in Singapore’.² Another description, by the scholar Yue Yujie 岳玉杰,

² Authors who returned to live in China or their families and friends were asked directly about their life after their return and in what way they have devoted themselves to the promotion of literature. See Ming Luo, *Nanlai zuojia yanjiu ziliao* 南來作家研究資料 (*Songs of the South: Research Materials on Chinese Authors in Singapore 1920–1965*), 1st ed. (Singapore: Xinjiapo guojia tushuguan guanliju

also takes into account the writers' cultural Chinese background: "southbound literati" refers to writers who were born and received their cultural education and literary enlightenment in China'. The May Fourth literary tradition that these intellectuals brought with them gradually merged into the local Malaysian and Singaporean literature.³

Scholars have attempted to categorize these literati according to personal background or place of residence. Some of these categories and definitions are perhaps too broad and include writers who moved westwards, for instance to the US, and it is debatable whether they should be considered *southbound* literati. Their diversity is clear in the many distinct categories that Luo has created based on their age and personal backgrounds. He draws distinctions between those who were intellectuals in China before arriving in Southeast Asia; active participants in the May Fourth Movement; writers from China who lived in Singapore or Malaysia; writers from Singapore who lived in China; and writers who settled in the US or elsewhere in the West.⁴ Interestingly, the group that lived in China are also called southbound literati, although it has also been suggested that they be called northbound writers. Regardless of how minimal the impact of their work, says Lui, they contributed to the treasured world of Chinese literature.⁵ It is difficult to specify which writers fall into which category because 'these authors are locally known as southbound writers, but as soon as they

新加坡國家圖書館管理局 (Singapore National Library Board), 2003), 2. For the original manuscript, see *Nanlai zuojia shougao tupian zhan 南來作家手稿圖片展, (The Manuscript and Pictorial Exhibition on Chinese Authors in Early Singapore)*, ed. by Lin Huanzhang 林煥章 et al., Singapore: People's Publishing Pte Ltd, 2001.

³ Yue Yujie 岳玉杰, 'Xinma nanlai zuojia qun xiaoshuo moshi yanbian de lishi jincheng he yiyi 新馬南來作家群小說模式演變的歷史進程和意義 (The Historical Process and Meaning of the Development of Novel Patterns by the Southbound Literati in Singapore and Malaysia)', *Shijie huawen wenxue luntan 世界華文文學論壇 (Forum for Chinese Literature of the World)* 2 (1999): 21.

⁴ The last category is questionable if taking, for example, the Chinese writer Zhang Ailing 張愛玲 into account who has been discussed by Zhao Yule in terms of her *southbound literati* status, even though she moved to the US in 1955 where she has spent most of her life until her death in 1995. See Zhao Yule 趙雨樂, *Jindai nanlai wenren de Xianggang yinxiang yu guozu yishi 近代南來文人的香港印象與國族意識 (Modern Southbound Intellectuals Impression of Hong Kong and Their Nationalist Awareness)*, 1–3:261–74.

⁵ Ming Luo, *Nanlai zuojia yanjiu ziliao*, 11–12.

return to China they are called “returned overseas Chinese writers”. Their work differs from that of local Chinese writers, as ‘in their writing they prioritize an “overseas-Chinese” theme (*huaqiao tica* 華僑題材) and therefore distinguish themselves from local Chinese writers on matters of content and perspective’.⁶ Despite their different subject matter, Luo observes, ‘the southbound literati were still concerned with China because they made use of overseas-Chinese media to express their opinions on the current situation, as well as on China’s fate and future’.⁷ After all, ‘despite the writer’s place of residence, ... they may live in South Asia, but “their hearts belong to China” ... (*shen zai Yazhou, xin zai Zhongguo* 身在南亞，心在中國).⁸ As expatriates in a foreign country, they could not detach themselves from their culture of origin nor help looking back at their former lives and the place where they were born and had grown up. As southbound migrants they wanted to tell their own and others’ stories. ‘Since they had received their education in the mother tongue, they were concerned about the image of their homeland and country more than the depiction of the foreign land. In tracing their roots, they discovered and created a new collective memory to forge a new ethnic identity’.⁹ Literary and art works reminded the migrants of their love for the motherland and reflected their homesickness; most of these works are essays about Chinese topics and in particular education, culture, and society.¹⁰

The migrant writers did not cease their cultural work either within or outside China. For instance the southbound writer Yu Dafu 郁達夫, who migrated to Singapore in 1938, carried out intense cultural work, helping young writers to revise their manuscripts and encouraging them to submit them for publication to

⁶ Ming Luo, 15.

⁷ Ming Luo, 14.

⁸ Ming Luo, 19.

⁹ Peng Weibu 彭衛步, *Shaoshu zuqun chuanmei de wenhua jiyi yu zuxing shuxie: ‘Xingzhou ribao’ wenyi fukan butong shiqi dui huaren de shenfen jiangou* 少數族群傳媒的文化記憶與族性書寫：‘星洲日報’文藝副刊不同時期對華人的身份建構 (Cultural Memory and Ethnic Writing in the Media of Minorities: Chinese Identity Construction in Different Periods of the Sin Chew Daily’s Literary Supplement) (Guangzhou 廣州: Jinan daxue chubanshe 暨南大學出版社 (Jinan University Press), 2012), 128.

¹⁰ Peng Weibu 彭衛步, 142.

raise the literary standard in Mainland China.¹¹ Newspapers, for instance, the Malaysian newspaper *Xin Chew Daily* (*Xingzhou ribao* 新洲日報), employed southbound literati to enhance their literary quality.¹² The scholars Lin Zhen 林臻 and Zhu Chongke 朱崇科 also mention the southbound literati's enormous and significant contribution on various cultural levels.¹³

5.2 The southbound literati in Hong Kong

Literary history has so far categorized the novels of the southbound literati according to their authors' political inclinations, not surprisingly given the financial support forthcoming from the two political camps. Previous research has mainly studied this body of fiction as Cold War narratives within a framework of left- and right-wing literature.¹⁴ While the Cold War's geopolitical and ideological contestation drove a wedge between the two camps in Hong Kong's literary circles writers in both political camps kept their main focus on China, as Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee] concludes:

¹¹ Du Cheng 杜誠, “Yu Dafu de nanlai: kangri, liuwang, shizong” zuotan hui ceji 「郁達夫的南來——抗日、流亡、失蹤」座談會側記 (“Yu Dafu Heading South: Resistance against Japan, Exile, and Disappearing” Sidelights of a Symposium), *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*) 19 (2012): 13.

¹² Peng Weibu 彭衛步, Shaoshu zuqun chuanmei de wenhua jiyi yu zuxing shuxie 少數族群傳媒的文化記憶與族性書寫, 142.

¹³ Lin Zhen 林臻, ‘Lüelun Zhongguo zuojia de nanlai yeji 略論中國作家的南來業績 (A Brief Discussion of the Achievements of Southbound Chinese Writers)’, *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*) 10 (1985): 89; Zhu Suike 朱崇科, ‘Wo kan “nanlai zuojia” 我看「南來作家」 (My View of the “Southbound Literati”)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 169 (1999): 81.

¹⁴ See Pan Yatun 潘亞暉 and Wang Yisheng 王義生, *Xianggang wenxue gaiguan* 香港文學概觀 (*An Overview of Hong Kong Literature*) (Xiamen 廈門: Lujiang chubanshe 鷺江出版社 (Lujiang Publishing House), 1993), 180; Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], ‘Writing across Borders: Hong Kong's 1950s and the Present’, 25; Ho, ‘Nationalism, Internationalism, the Cold War: Crossing Literary-Cultural Boundaries in 1950s Hong Kong’, 85–104. Also, according to Le Qi 樂琦, the writers generated a ‘southbound space’ that merged the political with the literary. See 樂琦 Qi Le, ‘Ershi shiji shangbanye Xianggang wenxue chang yu zuojia nanlai kongjian de shengcheng 20 世紀上半葉香港文學場與作家南來空間的生成 (Hong Kong's Literary Field in the First Half of the 20th Century and the Creation of Space by the Southbound Literati)’, *Xiaoshuo pinglun* 小說評論 (*Fiction Review*) 6 (2014): 192–96.

The 'greenback offensive' emerged in the fifties during a period when the Cold War structure took shape. As a result, Hong Kong's cultural world was temporarily under the power of the right-wing camp. Whether to the left in the forties or the right in the fifties, most cultural workers who took up leading positions on this matter and moved from Mainland China to Hong Kong were concerned about China's politics and culture, paying more attention to these than to Hong Kong itself.¹⁵

Moreover, as they were positioned at the periphery of China, forced into self-imposed exile, the majority of the intellectuals saw it as their mission and duty to preserve the most fundamental principles of Chinese culture and represent and promote them in the British Crown Colony.

5.2.1 *Defining the southbound literati (nanlai wenren 南來文人)*

In a general introduction to Hong Kong literature, Huang Weiliang 黃維樑 assigns Hong Kong writers to four categories. Although he does not mention the southbound literati or whether they belonged explicitly to any of these categories he emphasizes that a writer's place of origin is not necessarily relevant to their artistic reputation, and as long as their topic is Hong Kong they can be considered a Hong Kong writer.

Huang's first category includes writers born and raised in Hong Kong who wrote and became famous there. The second group is of writers who were not born in Hong Kong but grew up there, started their writing career and later became popular there. The third category consists of those neither born nor raised in Hong Kong, but who started writing and became famous in Hong Kong. The fourth, to which the southbound literati belong, is of writers not born or raised in Hong Kong who had started writing and were already famous before they came to Hong Kong to live temporarily or even settle long-term and continue to pursue their careers as writers. Huang's categories are very broad,

¹⁵ Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], 'Wenyi, zhengzhi, lishi yu Xianggang 文藝、政治、歷史與香港 (Literature and Art, Politics, History, and Hong Kong)', *Bafang wenyi congkan 八方文藝叢刊 (Art Journal of Eight Directions)* 7 (1987): 76.

differentiating only between writers born and or not born in Hong Kong and between those who became famous before or after coming to Hong Kong.

Huang mentions the two southbound writers Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 and Xu Xu 徐許, though he does not pay close attention to their migrant status.¹⁶ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳 offers one of the many definitions of southbound writers, with a stronger emphasis on their background: '[t]he term "southbound literati" refers to those Hong Kong writers who had a Chinese education and cultural background and came by choice or were sent into exile to Hong Kong. These writers were anxious about and perplexed by their cross-border identity'.¹⁷

Hu Chuanji's 胡傳吉 most recent paper 'On the Literary History of Hong Kong Writers in the 1940s and 1950s' discusses the various terms used for the migrant writers including 'migrant writers' (*nanmin zuojia* 難民作家新洲日報, 'fallen literati' (*luonan wenren* 落難文人), 'southbound literati' (*nanlai wenren* 南來文人), and 'escaped literati' (*taonan wenren* 逃難文人), which clearly, according to Hu, show the attempt to define this heterogeneous group of writers. While each term includes a particular emphasis on or inclination towards either China or Hong Kong, at the same it shows the nature of the relationship between the two; they entail different ideas and concepts, and Hu asks how and according to which criteria these writers can be defined: according to their place of origin, the time period of the migration, or the duration of their stay? In Hu's opinion, given Hong Kong's complex setting and political circumstances and the writers' left, right, centre or even marginal political directions, it is impossible to find a term that applies to these writers. However the literati had an impact on Hong Kong literature and following generations of writers in one way or another.¹⁸

¹⁶ Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, *Xianggang wenxue chutan* 香港文學初探 (*An Initial Exploration of Hong Kong Literature*), 1st ed. (Beijing 北京: Zhongguo youyi chubanshe 中國友誼出版社 (China Friendship Publishing House), 1987), 15–16.

¹⁷ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Xianggang nanlai zuojia de shenfen jiegou' 香港南來作家的身份建構 (Identity Construction of Hong Kong's Southbound Literati)' (doctoral dissertation, Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社 (China Social Sciences Press), 2007), 9.

¹⁸ Hu Chuanji 胡傳吉, 'Ershi shiji siwushi niandai Xianggang nanlai wenren de wenxue shilun' 20世紀四五十年代香港南來文人的文學史論 (On the Literary History of the Southbound Writers in the 1940s and 1950s)', *Wenxue jiaoyu* 文學教育 (*Literature Education*), no. 9 (2015): 4–8.

Lu Weiluan's 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen] paper 'A Simple Introduction to the Southbound Literati' mentions their special status, in that their work can be considered to belong to Chinese literature on the one hand and to Hong Kong literature on the other. Lu suggests a nuanced view: as the migration wave of each decade carried different types of intellectual with specific experiences, the power shifted between left and right between the communists and the nationalists (*hongbai duili* 紅白對立) from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s.¹⁹

The adjective 'southbound' describes the group of intellectuals who left China and headed south, generally to Southeast Asia and Hong Kong, although in Gu Yuanqing's 古遠清 opinion the "southbound poet" is [in general] not a genre concept, and it usually refers to Mainland Chinese writers who came to Hong Kong'.²⁰ The Hong Kong writer and literary critic Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷 emphasizes the exceptional circumstances in which these migrant intellectuals found themselves, and how 'being "southbound" was a special cultural phenomenon. In the past century Hong Kong, as a colony with a special geographical position, has provided shelter for several groups of literati who left China for various reasons. Hong Kong naturally became a "safe haven" for Chinese literati'.²¹ Besides the literati there were also scholars, historians, officials, politicians, and political dissidents who benefited from Hong Kong's strategic position and sought refuge there from the late nineteenth century onwards.²² But significantly, in the 1950s

¹⁹ Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], eds., "Nanlai zuojia" qianshuo 「南來作家」淺說 (A Simple Introduction to the "Southbound Literati"), in *Zhuiji Xianggang wenxue 追跡香港文學 (Tracing Hong Kong Literature)* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1997), 115.

²⁰ Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, 'Wuliushi niandai de Xianggang "nanlai shiren" 五六十年代的香港「南來詩人」 (Hong Kong's "Southbound Poets" in the 1950s and 1960s)', *Zuojia 作家 (Writer)* 58 (2007): 89.

²¹ Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, 'You nanlai er bentu: "Tao Ran zuopin pinglun ji" xu 由南來而本土——「陶然作品評論集」序 (From South to the Homeland: Preface to "Collection of Tao Ran's Commented Works")', *Wenxue pinglun 文學評論 (Hong Kong Literature Study)* 5 (2011): 28.

²² Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], *Xianggang wenxue sanbu 香港文學散步 (A Literary Walk in Hong Kong)* (Shanghai: Shanghai yiwén chubanshe 上海譯文出版社 (Shanghai Translation Publishing House), 2015); Zhao Yule 趙雨樂, *Jindai nanlai wenren de Xianggang yinxiang yu guozu yishi 近代南來文人的香港印象與國族意識 (Modern Southbound Intellectuals Impression of Hong Kong and Their Nationalist Awareness)*.

it was a safe haven for many writers for two reasons: first, after the long civil war between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT) which led to the foundation of the PRC, right-leaning intellectuals escaped the Mainland and headed to Hong Kong for what they assumed would be a temporary stay. Second, at first intellectuals coming from the Mainland, especially from the modern metropolis Shanghai, a cultural centre for many decades, did not find Hong Kong attractive. Notwithstanding, cultural workers were drawn to Hong Kong at the time by its liberal atmosphere and freedom of speech. As a result of the migration flux, the number of southbound writers in Hong Kong rose to become a third to three quarters of the total number of Hong Kong writers in the 1950s.²³ Literary scholars continually emphasize their huge contribution to Hong Kong's literary development and growth, at the same time benefitting from the relatively quiet writing environment in times of economic and political turmoil.²⁴ All circumstances considered, what makes the southbound literati unique 'is their political consciousness, cultural mission, and their various adaptive survival mechanisms that created the characteristic of cultural diversity in the early 1950s'.²⁵

5.2.2 *Emigration waves*

Emigration waves from China to Hong Kong and Southeast Asia occurred at different periods throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Literary scholars distinguish three or four crucial phases during which cultural workers

²³ Wang Jiancong 王劍叢, *Xianggang wenxue shi* 香港文學史 (*A History of Hong Kong Literature*), 8; 黃萬華 Huang Wanhua, 'Zhanhou Xianggang xiaoshuo: chaoyue zhengzhijhua he shangpinhua de bendihua jincheng 戰後香港小說：超越政治化和商品化的本地化進程 (Post-War Hong Kong Novels: Transgressing the Localization Process of Politicization and Commercialization)', 158.

²⁴ 王淑芝 Wang Shuzhi, *Taigang ao ji haiwai huaren wenxue* 台港澳及海外華人文學 (*Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and Oversea Chinese Literature*) (Changchun 長春: Dongbei shifan daxue chubanshe 東北師範大學出版社 (Northeast Normal University Press), 2015), 187.

²⁵ Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], *Xianggang xin wenxue nianbiao, 1950–1969 nian* 香港新文學年表, 1950–1969 年 (*A Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969*), 12.

fled political and economic circumstances on the Mainland.²⁶ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳 pinpoints three migrant influxes, the first was in the late 1940s, when left-leaning writers were leaving China during its political and economic decline; the second in the 1960s and 1970s during the Cultural Revolution, and the third during the 1980s and 1990s, set off by Deng Xiaoping's economic reform.²⁷ For Liu Jun 劉俊, on the other hand, the first emigration wave was in the 1930s, caused by the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan (1937–1945), followed by further waves during the Chinese Civil War in the 1940s, and in the 1950s initiated by the Communists' victory over the Nationalists in 1949. The last emigration wave was in the 1970s and consisted of southbound literati who settled in Hong Kong having studied or grown up abroad.²⁸ Gu Yuanqing 古遠清

²⁶ Wu Shanghua lists four migration periods, one in each decade, starting with the Second Sino-Japanese War in the 1930s and then in the 1940s, 1950s and 1970's. Wu Shanghua 吳尚華, *Taigang wenxue yanjiu* 台港文學研究 (*Study on Taiwan and Hong Kong Literature*) (Hefei 合肥: Anhui renmin chubanshe 安徽人民出版社 (Anhui Peoples' Publishing House), 2007), 170. Wu Yaozong 吳耀宗 discusses the negative and distorted image of Hong Kong created by the fourth generation of Southbound writers from Shanghai. See Wu Yaozong 吳耀宗, 'Cong Beijiao dao Jiulong dong: zai gang Shanghai zuojia de Xianggang xiangxiang 從北角到九龍東: 在港上海作家的香港想像 (From North Point to Kowloon East: The Image of Hong Kong by Shanghai Writers in Hong Kong)', *Xiandai Zhongwenxue kan* 現代中文學刊 (*Journal of Modern Chinese Studies*), 2012, 64–71.

²⁷ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Xingzou zai bianyuan de Xianggang nanlai zuojia 行走在邊緣的香港南來作家 (Hong Kong's Southbound Literati Walking on the Borderline)', *Chengshi Wenyi* 城市文藝 11 (2006): 73; Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Yizhihua, renjianhua, zongtihu: Xianggang nanlai zuojia xushu xianggang de fangshi 異質化, 人間化, 總體化——香港南來作家敘述香港的方式 (Heterogeneity, Humanization, Totalization: The Style by Hong Kong's Southbound Literati When Their Writing on Hong Kong)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*) 262 (2006): 84. According to Ji Hongfang, each wave triggers a certain kind of memory of the writers. Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Xushi he xingxiang: Xianggang nanlai zuojia shenfen jiangou de liangge zhidian 敘事和形象——香港南來作家身份建構的兩個支點 (Narrative and Image: Two Pivot Points on the Identity Construction of the Southbound Literati)', *Xianggang Zuojia* 香港作家 4 (2009): 32.

²⁸ Liu Jun 劉俊, 'Cong beishang dao nanlai: duozhong jingyan: Xianggang jingyu, shijie shiye 從北上到南來: 多重經驗, 香港境遇, 世界視野 (From North to South: Multiple Experiences, Hong Kong's Circumstances and the World's Horizon)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*) 282 (2008): 36. Su also divides the migrant flows from mainland China to Hong Kong into three time periods, the first from 1937 to 1945 due to the Second Sino-Japanese war (*Kangri zhanzheng* 抗日戰爭); the second in 1945–1949 as a consequence of the ongoing Chinese civil war (*Guogong neizhan* 國共內戰), and the third from the end of 1948 to the Chinese Economic Reform in the 1970s following the establishment of the People's Republic of China. See Su Weizhen 蘇偉貞, 'Bu'an, yanshi yu ziwo tuiyin: nanlai wenren de Xianggang shuxie cong 1950 nian chufa 不安, 厭世與自

and Ji Honfang 計紅芳 identify three different periods during which southbound literati arrived in Hong Kong. The first was during the War of Resistance to Japan in the 1930s. The second, and Ji does not mention when this happened, was the arrival of a group of writers who stayed for a long time in Hong Kong before becoming permanent residents; and the last wave included writers from not only from Mainland China but also Southeast Asia.²⁹ Pan Yatun 潘亞暉 also defines three generations based on their age. The first group consisted of an older generation of writers who were already famous when they moved to Hong Kong and had received both a Chinese and a Western education. The second group was middle-aged and had left the Mainland before the 1950s but still had roots there, although they can also be considered Hong Kong writers. The last wave, in the 1970s and 1980s, was of middle-aged and elderly migrants who had already become writers before they arrived to Hong Kong.³⁰

5.2.2.1 THE (POST-)FORMATIVE YEARS

The majority of these migrant literati did not come to Hong Kong by choice, although they were aware of the advantages that Hong Kong could provide. The reason for the southbound writers' move to Hong Kong around the time of the establishment of the PRC in 1949 was the unstable and chaotic political situation. Amidst the turmoil and instability on the Mainland they longed for a place that would provide a sense of security and artistic freedom. Hong Kong seemed the

我退隱：南來文人的香港書寫—從 1950 年出發 (Insecure, Pessimistic, and Reserved: How the 1950s Literati from Mainland Write in Hong Kong)', *Sichuan daxue xuebao* 四川大學學報 (*Journal of Sichuan University*) 176, no. 5 (2011): 88.

²⁹ Huang Kangxian and Gu Yuanqing also observe four migration waves. See Huang Kangxian 黃康顯, 'Xianggang wenxue de gen 香港文學的根 (The Roots of Hong Kong Literature)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*) 271 (2007): 91; Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, 'Wuliushi niandai de Xianggang "nanlai shiren" 五六十年代的香港「南來詩人」 (Hong Kong's "Southbound Poets" in the 1950s and 1960s)', 89.

³⁰ Pan Yatun 潘亞暉, 'Xianggang nanlai zuojia jianlun 香港南來作家簡論 (A Brief Discussion of Hong Kong's Southbound Literati)', *Jinan xuebao* 暨南學報 (*Jinan Students' Journal*) 2 (1989): 13. Agnes Ku discerns four massive migrant flows throughout the second half of the twentieth century in 1949–1952, 1958–1962, 1967–1973, 1979–1980. See Agnes S. Ku, 'Immigration Policies, Discourses, and the Politics of Local Belonging in Hong Kong (1950–1980)', *Modern China* 30, no. 3 (2004): 335.

obvious choice, since they would be far enough away from the turbulent politics on the Mainland, yet close enough to observe the political changes and act upon them if required. However, their experience in colonial Hong Kong differed from their expectations in many ways. They were observers in a marginal position from which they felt the need to express their views and enlighten the local people. The left-wing literati, for instance, had a strong tendency to criticize Hong Kong's colonial capitalist society and to show their feeling of alienation from the people and the city.

The intellectuals would have had various reasons for choosing Hong Kong as their destination, although Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen] notes that they 'did not go to other places because this piece of land was convenient for staying close to their homeland. They were offered a liberal space, which they made use of and in which they took on their role to voice to and shine upon the motherland'.³¹ Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen] describes the migrants feeling both superior and alienated: '[i]n terms of cultural level, they had come from a place with a dominant culture and mainstream literature and art to an island governed by foreigners. Besides this, their way of life had changed dramatically as the language, social customs, ideology, and even values were entirely different'.³²

Zhang Yongmei 張詠梅 shares a similar view in writing about the centralising perspective that simultaneously placed the writers on the margins of Hong Kong society. Superiority and alienation predominated in their perspectives and daily lives. 'To maintain "progressiveness" and "purity", they had to keep a distance from Hong Kong's society'. Left-wing writers in particular considered themselves progressive and looked down on local Hong Kong people, whom they saw as backward (*luohou* 落後). They were also living in a society which corrupted their hearts and minds. As a result 'they situated themselves,

³¹ Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], *Xianggang wenxue sanbu* 香港文学散步 (A Literary Walk in Hong Kong), 2.

³² Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], "'Nanlai zuojia" qianshuo 「南來作家」淺說 (A Simple Introduction to the "Southbound Literati")', 117.

consciously or unconsciously, on the margins of Hong Kong society and found themselves in a paradoxical situation in which they were psychologically inclined towards Mainland China, yet in reality were on the margins'.³³ Zhang Yongmei 張詠梅 argues that the contradictory relationship between centre and margin played a crucial role for the left-wing writers, who saw themselves as advocates of a 'New China' (*Xin Zhongguo* 新中國) in spite of the fact that they were living on China's periphery in 'a capitalist commercial society and a colony ruled by the British. In the view of the left-wing writers, Hong Kong was therefore committing a double sin. They adopted a condescending attitude, criticizing the capitalist society and focusing on exposing its corruption and darkness. In doing so, they highlighted capitalist society's unfairness and injustice'.³⁴

Literature became soon a tool for setting and expressing a moral standard (*wenyi zaidao* 文藝載道), but also for educating and instructing (*jiaohua xunhui* 教化訓誨) the locals in Hong Kong. The writers depict Hong Kong from a realistic perspective that they considered 'healthy content', from which 'they used literature as a tool against injustice and as a form of resistance in the reality of human life' – '[U]sing literature as a tool to protest against the injustice in reality, there was a strong moral consciousness behind the recreation of reality through literature'. For the same reason the writers chose topics concerning the lives of people at the bottom of society. In general the left-wing narratives have an antagonistic structure, praising the beauty of China and revealing the dark side of Hong Kong to expose the harsh contrast between the two.³⁵

When the southbound literati 'headed south to Hong Kong they had already passed their so-called "formative years", including the formation of language and literary style'.³⁶ In particular, left-leaning writers in the 1950s had two tendencies: they condemned capitalism and they wrote on socio-critical

³³ Zhang Yongmei 張詠梅, *Bianyuan yu zhongxin*, 69–70.

³⁴ Zhang Yongmei 張詠梅, 262, 264.

³⁵ Zhang Yongmei 張詠梅, 262, 264–65.

³⁶ Huang Canran 黃燦然, 'Yimin yu wenxue: jiantan nanlai zuojia 移民與文學——兼談南來作家 (Migration and Literature: Talking about the Southbound Literati)', *Ming bao* 明報 (*Ming Pao*), 3 December 2000.

topics such as the stories of workers, hawkers, dance girls, or ‘whitewashed Chinese’ (*baihua* 白華). They wanted to expose the abnormal state of Hong Kong’s capitalistic society and class oppression. Their second tendency was to avoid political topics, as magazine and journal readers generally prefer non-political writing. Some left-wing writers were not concerned about creating realistic depictions and favoured texts or text formats of the native place style (*guxiang fengmao* 故鄉風貌), cultural and historical anecdotes (*wenwu zhanggu* 文物掌故), local customs (*fengtu renqing* 風土人情), and study notes (*dushu zhaji* 讀書札記). Other ways of avoiding politics-related topics were diluting the political colour and not adopting the Mainland’s literature and art policy of the time.³⁷ City legends with a touch of romance or melancholy and a convoluted plot were more likely to attract a broad readership and meet the taste of city-dwellers.³⁸ The CCP’s policy and propaganda had a strong influence on left-wing narratives in Hong Kong in spite of attempts by the British colonial regime to contain the spread of left-wing sentiment and leftist movements.³⁹ Hong Kong leftist writings show, as Ji Hongfang 計紅芳 observes, tendencies to heterogenize, creating an unreal image of the colony: ‘Hong Kong is just a stage set, and the writing about the reality of Hong Kong is obviously a heterogenization under the spell of Mainland ideology that maintains a distance from the real Hong Kong’.⁴⁰ The literati’s refugee status contributed to the alienating effect as their depictions derived from a perspective that ‘examines and portrays Hong Kong critically: the author has the mentality of a refugee seeking security, truth, and freedom but

³⁷ Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], “‘Nanlai zuojia’ qianshuo 「南來作家」淺說 (A Simple Introduction to the “Southbound Literati)”’, 121–22. The Mainland advocated art and literature of feudal and proletarian themes.

³⁸ Wang Jiancong 王劍叢, *Xianggang wenxue shi* 香港文學史 (A History of Hong Kong Literature), 78.

³⁹ Zhang Yongmei 張詠梅, *Bianyuan yu zhongxin*, 56–60, 61–65.

⁴⁰ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, ‘Yizhihua, renjianhua, zongtihu: Xianggang nanlai zuojia xushu Xianggang de fangshi 異質化, 人間化, 總體化——香港南來作家敘述香港的方式 (Heterogeneity, Humanization, Totalization: The Style by Hong Kong’s Southbound Literati in Their Writing on Hong Kong)’, 84.

unable to find them. The heterogenization of an “absurd, brutal, and cruel” description of Hong Kong is therefore expected’.⁴¹

The literati not only distanced their work from Hong Kong; they were also highly critical of what they saw as its cold and indifferent society, and especially its capitalism. The society on the Mainland to which they had previously belonged was in contradistinction to that of Hong Kong. China’s anti-capitalist influence was striking and profound, as Liu Jun 劉俊 notes: ‘[i]n a capitalist society everything, including the people’s values, is measured in terms of the market and capital. When all things, including people, are commercialized, money and capital fetishism are prevalent. And the warmth of the human world is faced with this bitterly cold, iron law where one finds no space to exist’.⁴²

The intellectuals’ growing resentment was inevitable; for them, Hong Kong not only symbolized the centre of capitalist exploitation and a city ruled by foreign powers, it was also cruel and bore no resemblance to any other place in China, as Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han] asserts: ‘[m]any of the 1950s southbound writers voiced strong criticism of Hong Kong. In their novels and essays Hong Kong is always described as a city in which life is difficult, a city full of traps and a city indifferent to culture’.⁴³ Furthermore, ‘[h]uman relationships in Hong Kong are as thin as paper, you are on your own in every way’.⁴⁴ In this

⁴¹ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 85.

⁴² Liu Jun 劉俊, ‘Cong beishang dao nanlai: duozhong jingyan: Xianggang jingyu, shijie shiye 從北上到南來: 多重經驗, 香港境遇, 世界視野 (From North to South: Multiple Experiences, Hong Kong’s Circumstances and the World’s Horizon)’, 39. For instance the writer Ruan Lang 阮郎 (Tang Ren 唐人) adopts a black and white thinking and expresses criticism against the colonial and capitalistic Hong Kong society. Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, ‘Ping Xianggang liangdai nanlai zuojia 評香港兩代南來作家 (Comments on the Two Generations of Southbound Literati in Hong Kong)’, *Kaifang shidai 開放時代 (Open Times)*, no. 6 (1998): 67–73.

⁴³ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], ‘Chonghui wushi niandai nanlai wenren de suxiang: yi wen de wenxue yu dianying chutan 重繪五十年代南來文人的塑像: 易文的文學與電影初探 (Re-Drawing the Figure of the Southbound Literati in the 50s: Pre-Exploring Yi Wen’s Literature and Films)’, 87.

⁴⁴ Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, ‘Tiankong xia de qianyi: qiantan zhong, gang jian de taochu yu yongru ji wo suozhi suosi nanlaren (jiceng) de shenghuo gingtai 天空下的遷移 —— 淺談中, 港間的逃出與湧入及我所知所思南來人(基層)的生活情態 (Migrating under the Sky: Light Talks on Escape and Influx between Hong Kong and China and the (Basic) Life of the Southbound People from the Point of What I Know and Think)’, *Wenxue shiji 文學世紀 (Literary Century)* 2, no. 19 (2002): 96.

highly-commercialized society, relationships between human beings were seen as indifferent and cold. Deep resentment spread into the writers' descriptions of their surroundings, as in southbound literatus Li Kuang's 力匡 depiction: '[t]his bullet-small island is thick with haze and it is always winter: it cannot be compared with the Pearl River and its spring-night rains. In the eyes of the refugees, Hong Kong not only has no springs – even the last flower petals have withered, one after another'.⁴⁵

5.2.2.2 MENTALITY AND IDENTITY: SOJOURNER, REFUGEE OR MIGRANT?

The literati's negative perception of Hong Kong was certainly connected to their marginalized identity and status. Hongkongers struggled for a long time with the colony's identity, which they found hard to grasp, also due to its geopolitical and historical significance it was fluid and in a state of constantly redefining itself, as Tam Kwok-kan puts it: '[i]n actual truth, Hong Kong does not build its culture by accumulation and does not rely on tradition. It is a place where people continually search for and forge new identities ... For the Hong Kong people identities are not something fixed, but something that appears, disappears and reappears'.⁴⁶ The Hong Kong writer Xi Xi describes in her novel *Marvels of a Floating City* (*Fucheng zhiyi* 浮城誌異) (1986) how Hong Kong citizens become hollow, eaten by worms from the inside, and as a result the city becomes light and begins to rise into the air. The literary scholar Ackbar Abbas similarly speaks of Hong Kong as 'posited on the imminence of its disappearance'.⁴⁷ Because it served as a space of transit in which 'much of the population was made up of refugees or expatriates who

⁴⁵ Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, 'Wuliushi niandai de Xianggang "nanlai shiren" 五六十年代的香港「南來詩人」 (Hong Kong's "Southbound Poets" in the 1950s and 1960s)', 97.

⁴⁶ Kwok-kan Tam, 'Identity on the Bridge: Double (De/)Colonization of the Hong Kong Poet Gu Cangwu', in *Colonizer and Colonized*, ed. Theo d'Haen, Proceedings of the XVth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 67.

⁴⁷ Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, Public Worlds (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1997).

thought of Hong Kong as a temporary stop, no matter how long they stayed', Hong Kong's culture existed within a space of disappearance.⁴⁸

Hong Kong was not a settled community in the first half of the twentieth century, its population consisting mainly of sojourners, economic migrants and refugees. Steve Tsang observes that 'until 1950, there was a free and regular movement of people to and from China. This produced a sojourner mentality and largely accounted for the non-development of a sense of local identity'.⁴⁹ In the 1950s residents who had left their home country for political and ideological reasons adopted a refugee mentality.⁵⁰ The southbound literati in the 1950s had not anticipated staying in Hong Kong permanently, having intended to return to China as soon as the political turmoil had subsided; and the right-leaning writers who had left the Mainland in a quest for freedom 'were a group of free intellectuals who, afraid of being thrown out by the Mainland's new regime, had left for self-imposed exile in Hong Kong. For this reason they are expected to be objective in their writing about Hong Kong, but due to their sojourner or refugee mentality their depiction of Hong Kong is superficial'.⁵¹ The mood caused by the circumstances is evident in their writing, as Gu Yuanqing 古遠清 states: '[a]s an island sojourner one fears the loneliness and the cold, and cannot get warm; one is not willing to dare to return and face the new regime. So one relies on memories to fill the emptiness and the loneliness of the soul'.⁵² The southbound literati were outsiders, and were stigmatized as such: '[r]egardless of their original character or any kind of achievement, once they crossed the Luohu Bridge they became

⁴⁸ Abbas, 7, 4.

⁴⁹ Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 180–81. It is not until the 1970s when Hong Kong people start to negotiate their subjectivities and form a local consciousness, although as Shen Xinamin argues, early tendencies of a Hong Kong identity can be observed in 1950s and 1960s novels. Xianmin Shen, 'Destination Hong Kong: Negotiating Locality in Hong Kong Novels 1945–1966' (doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, 2015).

⁵⁰ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 170.

⁵¹ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Yizhijhua, renjianhua, zongtihu: Xianggang nanlai zuojia xushu Xianggang de fangshi 異質化, 人間化, 總體化——香港南來作家敘述香港的方式 (Heterogeneity, Humanization, Totalization: The Style by Hong Kong's Southbound Literati in Their Writing on Hong Kong)', 84f.

⁵² Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, 'Wuliushi niandai de Xianggang "nanlai shiren" 五十年代的香港「南來詩人」 (Hong Kong's "Southbound Poets" in the 1950s and 1960s)', 97.

members of such a small island that their southbound status became a label or even an original sin that attracted doubtful and closed scrutinization and evaluation'.⁵³ Moreover, they experienced 'double marginalization' (*shuangchong bianyuanxin* 雙重邊緣性) in their self-imposed exile, first marginalized in their place of origin and then by the colonizers and locals of Hong Kong, and as a result they struggled with their cultural identity (*wenhua shenfen* 文化身份) and reconstruction of identity (*shenfen zhongjian* 身份重建) triggered by lack of recognition [of status and identity].⁵⁴ The writers were in a cultural limbo, torn between China and Hong Kong, an 'in-between mode' (*zhongjian zhuangtai* 中間狀態), alternating between the two worlds of socialism and capitalism, as Ji Hongfang 計紅 describes: 'Hong Kong's southbound literati carried the traditional Chinese parent-culture into the capitalistic cultural space in which their double marginalization imposed on them an in-between status from which they struggled to survive and grow'.⁵⁵ Hong Kong's colonial status underscored its own marginality, as Poshek Fu says: 'Hong Kong was on the margins of the Mainland, and its colonization by the British accentuated its marginality in the modern Chinese geopolitical imagination'.⁵⁶

5.2.3 Local and southbound: local literature, themes and motifs

In his 1998 article 'Where are the "natives" from?' the Hong Kong scholar Ip Iam-chong, after considering the early phase of the popular youth magazine *The Chinese Students' Weekly* (*Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao* 中國學生週報) in the

⁵³ Xu Nanshan 南山許, 'Nanlai wenhuaren de Xianggang gushi: du Zhou Mimi changpian xiaoshuo "wenqu pu" yougan 南來文化人的香港故事—讀周密密長篇小說“文曲譜”有感 (Hong Kong Stories of the Southbound Literati: Thoughts during the Reading of Zhou Mimi's Full-Length Novel *Wen Qupu*)', *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 (*Hong Kong Literature Study*) 10 (2010): 105. The Luowu Bridge (*Luohu qiao* 羅湖橋) was one of the border points controlling the flow of refugees between Guangdong and Hong Kong.

⁵⁴ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Xingzou zai bianyuan de Xianggang nanlai zuojia 行走在邊緣的香港南來作家 (Hong Kong's Southbound Literati Walking the Border)', 73.

⁵⁵ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 75.

⁵⁶ Poshek Fu, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong: The Politics of Chinese Cinemas* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 68.

1950s and 1960s, observes that the diasporic intellectuals in the midst of Hongkongers had taken to advocating cultural nationalism under colonial conditions. For instance the editors of *The Chinese Students' Weekly* had 'an explicit desire to enlighten the half-civilized natives' and 'to revive modern Chinese culture in Hong Kong, and then in China'. In doing so, they 'played the role of mediators between national culture and the half-civilized people who lived outside the cultural centre of China'.⁵⁷ These writers were driven from the outset by a desire to modernize the colonial city by disseminating 'new ideas, new culture, and new literature',⁵⁸ just as the May Fourth intellectuals had done a few decades earlier in China. They not only took on a key role in advocating cultural nationalism but were also regarded as leading writers in Hong Kong's literary circles,⁵⁹ and 'broke new ground and worked diligently under extremely difficult

⁵⁷ Iam-chong Ip, 'Where Are the "Natives" From? Hong Kong's Social Imagination in the 60's', *Hong Kong Cultural Studies Bulletin* (香港文化研究) 8-9 (1998): 19.

⁵⁸ Lin Zhen 林臻, 'Lüelun Zhongguo zuojia de nanlai yeji 略論中國作家的南來業績 (A Brief Discussion of the Achievements of Southbound Chinese Writers)', 89; Zhu Suike 朱崇科, 'Wo kan "nanlai zuojia" 我看「南來作家」(My View of the "Southbound Literati")', 81. Wang Shuzhi even argued that 'when the May Fourth New Culture Movement was soaring in the mainland, Hong Kong was still sleeping in a warm and bygone dream'. Wang Shuzhi 王淑芝, *Taigang aoji haiwai huaren wenxue 台港澳及海外華人文學 (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and Oversea Chinese Literature)*, 183. Literati were considered 'intellectuals' in Chinese cultural tradition with different missions according to different phases in Chinese history. In this context, the intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century were torn between the *status quo* and embracing a revolution that fundamentally reformed China. As a consequence 'the modern Chinese intelligentsia understood themselves as direct descendants of the traditionally intellectuals, because they shared the same sense of mission. Their mission as vanguard was to guide the Chinese fellow citizens to a new idealised order, despite the fact that in the minds of the modern intelligentsia this new order was built after Western models which stands in striking contrast to the Confucian model and for which realization the traditional intellectuals stood. Seemingly, the sense of mission among these Chinese intelligentsia was very strong since modern history accounted for several national defeats and humiliation'. See Cho-yun Hsü, 'Das Phänomen der chinesischen Intellektuellen: konzeptionelle und historische Aspekte', in *Chinesische Intellektuelle im 20. Jahrhundert: zwischen Tradition und Moderne*, ed. Karl-Heinz Pohl, Gudrun Wacker, and Huiru Liu, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde Hamburg* (Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1993), 19, 25.

⁵⁹ The southbound writers who escaped from the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) launched literary movements, seminars, and symposia in Hong Kong starting in the 1940s. Li Qing 犁青, 'Cong "nanlai zuojia" dao "Xianggang zuojia" 從「南來作家」到「香港作家」(From "Southbound Writers" to "Hong Kong Writers")', *Xin wenxue shiliao 新文學史料 (Historical Materials on New Literature)* 1 (1996): 188-92; Liu Denghan 劉登翰, *Xianggang wenxue shi 香港文學史 (A History of Hong Kong Literature)* (Beijing 北京: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社 (Peoples' Literature Publishing House), 1999), 137-46.

conditions and made an exceptional contribution to the flourishing of Hong Kong literature, which became mainstream literature'.⁶⁰ According to Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷 many writers who were already well-known on the Mainland became leading figures in Hong Kong's literary circles; in fact 'Hong Kong literature at that time could be seen as an extension of Mainland Chinese literature at the southern border'.⁶¹

The southbound writers were regarded as migrants and, as Ji Hongfang's 計紅芳 essay 'Walking the Borderline of Hong Kong's Southbound Literati'⁶² argues, they were located at the periphery of literary discourse. The term 'southbound' was common in Hong Kong literary circles at the time. Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷 notes: '[w]hen analysing an author, one has to first categorize the writer's identity. In Hong Kong's literary circles people often differentiated between

⁶⁰ Wu Shanghua 吳尚華, *Taigang wenxue yanjiu* 台港文學研究 (*Study on Taiwan and Hong Kong Literature*), 173. In particular, the first generation of southbound literati (who migrated before 1949) inherited the new literature from the May Fourth Movement. See Pan Yatun 潘亞暉, 'Xianggang nanlai zuojia jianlun 香港南來作家簡論 (A Brief Discussion of Hong Kong's Southbound Literati)', 14. The majority of the writers were influenced by May Fourth. See Xiao Xiangming 肖向明, 'Zhonghua wenhua beijing xia de Xianggang zuojia 中華文化背景下的香港作家 (Hong Kong Writers in the Context of Chinese Culture)', *Loudi shizhuan xuebao* 婁底師專學報 (*Journal of Loudi Teachers College*) 1 (1997): 43. A connection between mainland China and Hong Kong was established before the first wave when famous May Fourth writers, such as Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Mao Dun 茅盾, and Xia Yan 夏衍 visited Hong Kong. Wang Yitao 王一桃, 'Xianggang he dalu de wenyi qingyuan: "Xianggang wenyi zhi yuan" ba 香港和大陸的文藝情緣——「香港文藝之緣」跋 (The Predestined Love Liaison between Hong Kong's and China's literature and art: PS "Hong Kong's Fate in Art and Literature")', in *Xianggang wenxue yu xianshi zhuyi* 香港文學與現實主義 (*Hong Kong Literature and Realism*) (Hong Kong: Dangdai wenyi chubanshe 當代文藝出版社 (Contemporary Literature and Art Publishing House), 2000), 109–12.

⁶¹ Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, 'You nanlai er bentu: "Tao Ran zuopin pinglun ji" xu 由南來而本土——「陶然作品評論集」序 (From South to the Homeland: Preface to "Collection of Tao Ran's Commented Works")', 28. Hong Kong and Taiwan literature *Gangtai wenxue* 港台文學 are considered as an important subsidiary stream of the "vast and mighty mainstream" of Chinese literature. Han Wen 漢聞, 'Dalü yanjiu gangtai wenxue zai guankui 大陸研究港臺文學再管窺 (A Review of Mainland China's Study on Hong Kong's and Taiwan Literature)', *Xianggang zuojiabao* 香港作家報 (*Hong Kong Writers*) 9, no. 6 (1996): 72.

⁶² Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Xingzou zai bianyuan de Xianggang nanlai zuojia 行走在邊緣的香港南來作家 (Hong Kong's Southbound Literati Walking the Border)', 73–77.

southbound literati, local writers and foreign writers'.⁶³ Another author states that "southbound" belongs to the "other kind of group" found among the literati, and is therefore at the margin's margin'.⁶⁴ Although Gu Yuanqing 古遠清 observes that the distinction between these three 'tectonic plates' – southbound (*nanlai* 南來), local (*bentu* 本土), and foreign (*wailai* 外來) – are not clear-cut but blurred and fluid.⁶⁵ The same applied to Hong Kong's literary circles, which were loosely organized. According to Pan Yatun 潘亞暉, 'the southbound literati came to Hong Kong at different periods and their political or artistic views were, therefore, different. Moreover, they neither had an agenda nor organized themselves. For that reason there was no formation of a style, but rather literary circles with one or two senior writers at their core groups of authors affiliated to certain literary journals'.⁶⁶

Literary critics willingly discuss these writers' work within the framework of their distinct status in the colonial community;⁶⁷ attention has been also paid

⁶³ Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, 'You nanlai er bentu: "Tao Ran zuopin pinglun ji" xu 由南來而本土——「陶然作品評論集」序 (From South to the Homeland: Preface to "Collection of Tao Ran's Commented Works")', 28.

⁶⁴ Xu Nanshan 許南山, 'Nanlai wenhuaren de Xianggang gushi: du Zhou Mimi changpian xiaoshuo "Wenqu Pu" yougan 南來文化人的香港故事—讀周密密長篇小說「文曲譜」有感 (Hong Kong Stories of the Southbound Literati: Thoughts during the Reading of Zhou Mimi's Full-Length Novel *Wen Qupu*)', 105.

⁶⁵ Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, 'Wuliushi niandai de Xianggang "nanlai shiren" 五六十年代的香港「南來詩人」 (Hong Kong's "Southbound Poets" in the 1950s and 1960s)', 89. Apart from "local" and "foreign" Shi Jianwei and Wang Yisheng suggest other categories for the body of 1950s writings, such as "pure" or "popular" literature, left- or right-wing, and realism or modernism. See Shi Jianwei 施建偉 and Wang Yisheng 汪義生, 'Dangdai Xianggang wenxue de zhuxing: huishou wu liushi niandai de Xianggang wenxue 當代香港文學的鑄形—回首五六十年代的香港文學 (Casting a Form for Contemporary Hong Kong Literature: Looking Back on the Fifties and Sixties in Hong Kong Literature)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 147 (1997): 7.

⁶⁶ Pan Yatun 潘亞暉, 'Xianggang nanlai zuojia jianlun 香港南來作家簡論 (A Brief Discussion of Hong Kong's Southbound Literati)', 16. Although the local and southbound writers coexisted harmoniously together in Hong Kong, so Ji Hongfang. Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Wenxue shi shiye zhong de Xianggang nanlai zuojia 文學史視野中的香港南來作家 (Hong Kong's Southbound Literati from the Perspective of Literary History)', *Huawen wenxue* 華文文學 (*Chinese Literature*) 84 (2008): 41–44.

⁶⁷ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], "'Gaibian" de wenhua shenfen: yi wushi niandai Xianggang wenxue wei li 「改編」的文化身份：以五十年代香港文學為例 ("Re-Editing" the Cultural Identity: Taking Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s as an Example)'; Ji Hongfang 計紅芳,

to the literati's diasporic take on the historical and social circumstances prevailing in Hong Kong.⁶⁸ In general they were concerned about their literary legacy in Hong Kong regardless of whether they were categorized as southbound or local writers, as Pan Yatun 潘亞暉 asserts: '[t]he senior southbound literati share one common characteristic: they care about, protect, and support the literary youth no matter whether southbound or local'.⁶⁹ Literary scholars stress the point that these writers' efforts and contribution were essential to the formation of Hong Kong literature, making an instant impact in the early stages of its development. Huang Canran 黃燦然 writes that 'Hong Kong had a lot of migrants and they are commonly known as southbound literati. They played a crucial role in Hong Kong's literature and culture, especially in the early stages. One might even say they were the first to propagate Hong Kong literature'.⁷⁰ For Shu Bomin 舒伯敏 too, these writers shaped the literature through their selection of subject matter: '[a]lthough the southbound literati in Hong Kong were not native to Hong Kong, their writings depict Hong Kong. They explored the topics

'Nanlai zuojia shenfen jiangou de canzhao huanjing' 南來作家身份建構的參照環境 (A Reference to the Environment of the Southbound Writers Identity Formation)', *Suzhou daxue wenxue yuan/Xianggang wenxue yanjiu zhuanji* 蘇州大學文學院/香港文學研究專輯 (*Soochow University School of Arts/Hong Kong Literature Studies Special Collection*) 42 (2005): 21–23; Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Xushi he xingxiang: Xianggang nanlai zuojia shenfen jiangou de liangge zhidian 敘事和形象——香港南來作家身份建構的兩個支點 (Narrative and Image: Two Pivotal Points on the Identity Construction of the Southbound Literati)', 32–34.

⁶⁸ Huang Jing 黃靜, '1950 zhi 1970 niandai Xianggang dushi xiaoshuo yanjiu 1950 至 1970 年代香港都市小說研究 (A Study on Hong Kong's Urban Novels from 1950 to 1970)' (master's thesis, Lingnan University, 2002), 92–96; Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Yizhigua, renjianhua, zongtigua: Xianggang nanlai zuojia xushu Xianggang de fangshi 異質化, 人間化, 總體化——香港南來作家敘述香港的方式 (Heterogeneity, Humanization, Totalization: The Style by Hong Kong's Southbound Literati in Their Writing on Hong Kong)', 84–87; Liu Jun 劉俊, 'Cong beishang dao nanlai: duozhong jingyan: Xianggang jingyu, shijie shiye 從北上到南來: 多重經驗, 香港境遇, 世界視野 (From North to South: Multiple Experiences, Hong Kong's Circumstances and the World's Horizon)', 37–43.

⁶⁹ Pan Yatun 潘亞暉, 'Xianggang nanlai zuojia jianlun 香港南來作家簡論 (A Brief Discussion of Hong Kong's Southbound Literati)', 17.

⁷⁰ Huang Canran 黃燦然, 'Yimin yu wenxue: jiantan nanlai zuojia 移民與文學——兼談南來作家 (Migration and Literature: Talking about the Southbound Literati)'.

of new emigrants and homesickness, etc. in Hong Kong literature'.⁷¹ The literati not only changed Hong Kong's literary-historical development but also launched events to attract young writers to lectures, workshops, and conferences and to encourage them to write and publish. In this way they fostered a group of young writers who opened the way for further generations of literati.⁷² The Mainland writers' first achievements were in the 1940s when they founded the Ta Teh Institute (*Da de xueyuan* 達德學院) (1946–1948) and the Southern Institute (1948–1955) (*Nanfang xueyuan* 南方學院). The Ta Teh Institute promoted the Cantonese dialect, and its students set up a research unit for literature in dialect (*Dade fangyan wenxue yanjiuzu* 達德方言文學研究組).⁷³ For Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, local consciousness in Hong Kong literature gradually started to take shape after 1949 when it was clear which writers would return to China and which would decide to stay in the colonial city.⁷⁴ Although, says Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, local literary consciousness was not established until the 1960s, when 'the relationship between the "self" and the "other" shifted. The southbound literati gradually became "the other"'.⁷⁵

The 1950s narratives of the southbound literati revolved around reminiscing nostalgically about the past and alienation from Hong Kong's colonial society. Leaving their homes and finding themselves in a foreign place generated

⁷¹ Shu Bomin 舒伯敏, 'Xianggang wenxue de yimian jingzi: du "lianhe wenxue" Xianggang wenxue zhuanhao yougan 香港文學的一面鏡子——讀「聯合文學」香港文學專號有感 (Mirroring One Side of Hong Kong Literature: Reading "Lianhe Wenxue" Hong Kong Literature Special Issue)', *Huaqiao ribao: wenlang* 華僑日報: 文廊 (*Wah Kiu Yat Po/Overseas Chinese Daily New: Section Literature*), 1992, p. 22.

⁷² Zhu Suike 朱崇科, 'Wo kan "nanlai zuojia" 我看「南來作家」 (My View of the "Southbound Literati")', 82.

⁷³ Liu Denghan 劉登翰, *Xianggang wenxue shi* 香港文學史 (A History of Hong Kong Literature), 174–77.

⁷⁴ Yang Su 楊素 and Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, "'Bendi yishi" he "bentu wenxue": fang Liu Yichang tan "wushi niandai Xianggang wenxue" 「本地意識」和「本土文學」—訪劉以鬯談「五十年代香港文學」 ("Local Consciousness" and "Local Literature": Interview with Liu Yichang on "Hong Kong Literature in the 1950s")', *Xingdao ribao, wenyi qixiang* 星島日報·文藝氣象 (*Sing Tao Daily*), 8 July 1992, 4.

⁷⁵ Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, 'You nanlai er bentu: "Tao Ran zuopin pinglun ji" xu 由南來而本土——「陶然作品評論集」序 (From South to the Homeland: Preface to "Collection of Tao Ran's Commented Works")', 28.

a homesickness which, as Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen] states, became a major topic due to their alienation, rejection, and antagonism.⁷⁶ This made them turn their backs on the present and reminisce about the past, which is why ‘in the vast majority of their work they used their own past experience, such as life on the Mainland, as a topic. They wrote about the War of Resistance to Japan and the Land Reform. Feeling that they had no choice but to write about their own former experience it is understandable that they felt temporarily alienated from Hong Kong in their writings’.⁷⁷ The writers’ memories become an essential part of themselves and, as Ji Hongfang 計紅芳 observes, their past shaped their writings in a creative way: ‘[t]he southbound literati went through painful memories of exile or self-imposed exile. Feelings of strangeness and inability to adapt, as well as anxiety about their identity at the bottom of society, all became rich sources for their writing’.⁷⁸ In dealing with the past the motifs of homesickness and nostalgia were of prime importance:

When the southbound literati were exiled to Hong Kong Island, they faced the alienation and the distance of a strange environment, a rootless wandering; besides that, the emotional experience of disappointment and inner anxiety pointed their brushstrokes towards the past so that they could return to their native place and express their loneliness and homesickness, which were difficult to overcome. They played out stories of missing the native place with which they released their anxieties about

⁷⁶ Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], “‘Nanlai zuojia’ qianshuo 「南來作家」淺說 (A Simple Introduction to the “Southbound Literati”)”, 118.

⁷⁷ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, ‘Wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代的香港小說 (Hong Kong Novels in the 1950s)’.

⁷⁸ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, ‘Xushi he xingxiang: Xianggang nanlai zuojia shenfen jiangou de liangge Zhidian 敘事和形象—香港南來作家身份建構的兩個支點 (Narrative and Image: Two Pivotal Points on the Identity Construction of the Southbound Literati)’, 32. Also, writing became the writers’ place of residence (*xiezuochengwei juzhu zhi di* 寫作成為居住之地) after the loss a geographical and spiritual home, see Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 33. Although in one way or other, they needed to adapt accordingly, as Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] points out, ‘in the 50s, the literati faced external changes in Hong Kong whilst they also made new adjustments concerning inner values and interpersonal relationships’. Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], ‘50 niandai xianggang wenxue de fuza wenhua beijing 50 年代香港文學的複雜文化背景 (The Complex Cultural Background of Hong Literature in the 1950s)’, 72.

their identity which was caused by obstacles to connecting to the unfamiliar environment.⁷⁹

The migrant writers alternated between two cultural reference points: their former existence on the Mainland which they knew so well and where they were educated, and their current life which they were barely able to access due to the language barrier and cultural distinctions: 'to seek the real and spiritual native place they were also striving to adjust and reaffirm themselves on personal initiative. They could only rely on the traditional cultural system of their previous existence on the Mainland and on the commercial cultural system as a Hong Kong migrant'. In contrast to local writers they experienced two different social systems, which made their thoughts and feelings deeper and more complex.⁸⁰ As Zhang Yongmei 張詠梅 points out, 'Hong Kong is a capitalist society. Yet the Leftists wanted to "shut the door and build socialism". The phrase "shut the door" clearly shows that they did not wish to be assimilated into Hong Kong's society, and they positioned themselves at the margins of Hong Kong's society for the long term'.⁸¹ The southbound writers were unable to develop an immediate approach to Hong Kong, and as a result either adopted a sojourner's perspective or escaped into fantasy, as Wang Jiaqi 王家祺 observes: 'they did not want and were not able to depict reality in Hong Kong, which clearly indicates how weak their identification with Hong Kong was. The majority of the novels were drawn from past experience of living in Mainland China, or they observed Hong Kong life from a Mainland Chinese sojourner's perspective whose focus was not always Hong Kong but the diasporic experiences of Chinese migrants'.⁸² The neglected present

⁷⁹ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Xianggang nanlai zuojia huaixiang muti de sanchongzou 香港南來作家懷想母體的三重奏 (The Maternal Nostalgia of the Hong Kong's Southbound Literati in Three Movements)', *Wenxue yanjiu 文學研究 (Literature Studies)*, no. 7 (2007): 24.

⁸⁰ Pan Yatun 潘亞暉, 'Xianggang nanlai zuojia jianlun 香港南來作家簡論 (A Brief Discussion of Hong Kong's Southbound Literati)', 13.

⁸¹ Zhang Yongmei 張詠梅, *Bianyuan yu zhongxin*, 70.

⁸² In the essay by the southbound literatus Tao Ran 陶然, he contests his multiple identity and comes to the conclusion that their past life on the Mainland played an important part in the works of the migrant intellectuals despite the fact that they attempted to adapt to a new setting. See also Wu Shanghua 吳尚華, *Taigang wenxue yanjiu 台港文學研究 (Study on Taiwan and Hong Kong Literature)*, 173;

invoked entry into a parallel world: '[t]he southbound literati's rejection and withdrawal from its instant realization are the common themes in their work. They insisted on not looking at Hong Kong and focused on the past, even escaping into a fantasy world'.⁸³

Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee] opines that there were two general categories of prose in the 1950s: 'scholar prose' (*shiren sanwen* 士人散文) and 'city people prose' (*shiren sanwen* 市人散文), both of which he criticizes. 'Scholar prose' pursues the May Fourth tradition and therefore lacks proximity to local Hong Kong, while 'city people prose' was written for commercial purposes and lacks quality.⁸⁴

The May Fourth tradition continued to influence the modern literature of the 1950s with, as Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] notes, some shifts and striking characteristics: 'first, beliefs and values changed from collective and common to individual and self-explorative ones. Second, the external description becomes the portrayal of the complex changes in the protagonist's inner world. Third, writers who had not necessarily taken a radical position, as most authors did, chose a middle-aged, steady style'.⁸⁵

Wang Jiaqi 王家祺, "Wo de xin reng zai beifang de gaoyuan": cong "hailan" kan wushi niandai nanlai zuojia de wenxue shengchan 「我的心仍在北方的高原」——從「海瀾」看五十年代南來作家的文學生產 ("My Heart Still Belongs to the North Plateau": The Literary Output of the Southbound Literati in the 1950s from the Perspective of "Hailan")', *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 (*Hong Kong Literature Study*), no. 26 (2013): 100.

⁸³ Wang Jiaqi 王家祺, 101.

⁸⁴ Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], 'Xianggang sanwen leixing yinlun: "shiren sanwen" yu "shiren sanwen" 香港散文類型引論——「士人散文」與「市人散文」 (Introductory remarks on Hong Kong's essay types: "Scholars' Essays" and "City-Dwellers' Essays")', in *Pousha shangsha: Zhongguo dangdai sanwen zawen guoji yantao hui lunwen ji* 剖沙賞沙: 中國當代散文雜文國際研討會論文集 (*Cut and Appreciate the Sand: Conference Proceedings of the International Symposium on Contemporary Chinese Essay*), ed. Huang Guobin 黃國彬 and Wang Lieyao 王列耀 (Guangzhou 廣州: Jinan daxue chubanshe 暨南大學出版社 (Jinan University Press), 1997), 337.

⁸⁵ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], '50 niandai Xianggang wenxue de fuza wenhua beiijing 50 年代香港文學的複雜文化背景 (The Complex Cultural Background of Hong Literature in the 1950s)', 73.

5.2.3.1 HEART AND BODY (*XIN HE SHEN* 心和身)

The home country and the writers' past lives are recurring motifs in their literary work. In their hearts they longed for home, and the repetition of these motifs in their writing shows how strongly connected they remained after settling in Hong Kong. The dual perception of past and present life can be considered part of the southbound literati's struggle, which mirrored the two worlds in which they found themselves. Their sojourn generated ambivalence and tension as long as they were not clear whether they would return to Mainland China or not. The writers carried a strong sense of duty to preserve Chinese culture in their state of exile. Particularly the intellectuals who fled China due to the communist takeover perceived communism as a threat to the core principles of Chinese culture and therefore antithetical to them,⁸⁶ and they sought to exert a cultural impact that would reach as far as China.

The literati nurtured a strong sense of belonging to China that resulted in a bifurcation of body and mind, as Lin Zhen 林臻 points out: '[i]t was quite common for these southbound writers from China to develop a strong diasporic mentality which means that the body is in Southeast Asia whereas the heart beats for China. And heading south was a matter of despair'.⁸⁷ They had always looked to the north for the Central Plain (北望中原 *beiwang zhongyuan*).⁸⁸ For instance the writer Li Huiyin 李輝英 (1911–1991), who originated from northeast China, was still writing about his native home and childhood life even after he had been

⁸⁶ Grace Ai-Ling Chou, *Confucianism, Colonialism, and the Cold War: Chinese Cultural Education at Hong Kong's New Asia College, 1949–63, Ideas, History, and Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 3–4.

⁸⁷ Lin Zhen 林臻, 'Lüelun Zhongguo zuojia de nanlai yeji 略論中國作家的南來業績 (A Brief Discussion of the Achievements of Southbound Chinese Writers)', 90. See also Stuart Hall's essay on cultural identity in which he describes diasporic identity as a product that is never complete and always in process: 'Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference'. Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2003), 235; 227–37.

⁸⁸ Wang Yanli 王艷麗, "'Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao' yu Xianggang wenxue de bentuhua 「中國學生週報」與香港文學的本土化 (The Chinese Students' Weekly and Localization of Hong Kong Literature)', *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan 中國現代文學研究叢刊 (Modern Chinese Literature Studies)* 10 (2015): 76.

settled in Hong Kong for more than ten years. Li's body of writing 'is exemplary of the writers' enthusiastic patriotism, living in Hong Kong and longing for the homeland'.⁸⁹ Many of the southbound literati's stories that are discussed in this study focus on two contradicting environments and life journeys with which the protagonist tries to come to terms.

5.2.3.2 PULP FICTION?

The body of fiction from the southbound literati has often been discussed in terms of its literary value and quality. It is argued that given their cultural and geographical transition the migrant writers may have been unable to produce high-quality literary work. Further reasons for pulp fiction cited include their abrupt transition to a new setting, their predominantly migrant perspective, their lack of deep and revealing insight into Hong Kong's society, and the commodification of literature in a materialistic society. While some literary scholars hold the opinion that both migrant and local writers made a strong contribution to Hong Kong's literary field, others take a more critical stance. Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 frankly admits that not all of the literary work of the 1950s was of outstanding quality due to the harsh conditions in which the literati found themselves; nonetheless, it reflects an important period in Hong Kong's literary history:

Although only a few works in the early 1950s are worth mentioning, it was nonetheless an important period in the development of Hong Kong's literature. During this time these writers, who were in a [difficult] predicament, almost lost their ambition and determination. They were easily stabbed by thistles and thorns and were likely to become defeatists.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, "Xianggang nanlai zuojia huaixiang muti de sanchongzou 香港南來作家懷想母體的三重奏 (The Maternal Nostalgia of the Hong Kong Southbound Literati in Three Movements)," 26.

⁹⁰ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, 'Wushi niandai chuqi de Xianggang wenxue 五十年代初期的香港文學 (Hong Kong Literature in the Early 1950s)', 14.

Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞 lists some reasons for the low quality of writing during this period:

Admittedly, the quality of the Hong Kong novels in the 1950s is generally poor. There are multiple reasons for this: for instance the departure of large groups of literary masters [in Hong Kong]; the fact that the southbound literati had not yet adopted a regular and beneficial attitude to writing; the interference of the Cold War and its political consciousness; the fact that local writers had not yet been able to form a [literary] force.⁹¹

In Yan's opinion the fluctuating arrival and departure of writers might explain why it was difficult for them to keep up a decent and consistent quality in their writing, but it is also true that assuring their livelihoods was a strong concern, as they relied on submitting a manuscript to a publisher with the required number of characters every day. As Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍 notes, 'they threw themselves into the cultural world and turned "making a living" to a key phrase [of survival]'.⁹² Also it should be remembered that what they wrote was not always important as long as they were able to submit a manuscript with the required number of characters.

Qin Huai's 秦淮 article 'What does the mirror say? The southbound literati's "love bond"' (*Jingzi ruhe shuo : nanlai zuojia 'qingyi ji'* 鏡子如何說—南來作家「情意結」) criticizes the shallowness of the writers' work and reiterates Shu Bomin's 舒伯敏 opinion in 'A mirror for Hong Kong's literature: Reading the *Joint Literature* special issue on Hong Kong literature' in which Shu describes their work as sentimental and shallow: 'generally speaking, the work of the southbound literati is full of excessive sentimentality and lacks depth, and above all they are not skilled at depicting modern society or the thoughts and emotions of modern people'. The fundamental weakness, Qin Huai 秦淮 says, lay in their attempt to transform Mainland ideas into ideas relating to Hong Kong society. Their inability to do this created empty and shallow subject matter without

⁹¹ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang xiaoshuo 五十年代的香港小說 (Hong Kong Novels in the 1950s)'.

⁹² Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 'Wushi niandai fuxian de Xianggang wenxue 五十年代浮現的香港文學 (The Emergence of Hong Kong Literature in the 1950s)', 107.

offering any revelation.⁹³ As well, the southbound literati had developed a migrant consciousness (*huaqiao yishi* 華僑意識) in their exile, similar to the migrant literati in Southeast Asia: '[d]ue to the short period of their sojourn, they were usually set on a special mission and most were unable to assimilate themselves into the lives of the local people of any class, nor could they gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the local society, culture and ethnic customs. They usually had a strong expatriate consciousness'. For this reason the southbound literati could not provide in-depth studies of the various strata of society, yet they tried to use the local and social style as background to their writing.⁹⁴ One can argue that their work was predestined to be regarded as pulp fiction, since the southbound literati faced Hong Kong's commercialized market for literature and art (*shangyehua de wenyi huanjing* 商業化的文藝環境) in an unfamiliar and complexly-structured materialistic society (*wuzhijie de shehui* 物質化社會).⁹⁵ This connects to the a debate on which genres of literary

⁹³ Shu Bomin speaks vaguely of the flavour of Hong Kong's literature being either too strong or too mild, being in general not balanced and giving the impression that it has just one taste. Shu Bomin 舒伯敏, 'Xianggang wenxue de yimian jingzi: du "lianhe wenxue" Xianggang wenxue zhuanhao yougan 香港文學的一面鏡子——讀「聯合文學」香港文學專號有感 (Mirroring One Side of Hong Kong Literature: Reading "Lianhe Wenxue" Hong Kong Literature Special Issue)'; Qin Huai 秦淮, 'Jingzi ruhe shuo: nanlai zuojia "qingyi jie" 鏡子如何說—南來作家「情意結」 (What Does the Mirror Say? Southbound Literati's "Love Bond")', *Xingdao ribao, wenyi qixiang* 星島日報·文藝氣象 (*Sing Tao Daily*), 10 November 1992, p. 4. At this point Qin Huai criticizes the commercialization and mass production of literature at the cost of quality. His description of the work of the Hong Kong southbound literati could also be applied to the formal characteristics of the work of the mainland writers; many scholars have criticized literature in written vernacular Chinese (*biahuawen* 白話文) for similar reasons.

⁹⁴ Lin Zhen 林臻, 'Luelun Zhongguo zuojia de nanlai yeji 略論中國作家的南來業績 (A Brief Discussion of the Achievements of Southbound Chinese Writers)', 89–90. According to Wu Shanghua, this changed in the 1960s due to deeper understanding of Hong Kong gained over time. Wu Shanghua 吳尚華, *Taigang wenxue yanjiu* 台港文學研究 (*Study on Taiwan and Hong Kong Literature*), 174.

⁹⁵ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Xushi he xingxiang: Xianggang nanlai zuojia shenfen jiangou de liangge zhidian 敘事和形象—香港南來作家身份建構的兩個支點 (Narrative and Image: Two Pivotal Points on the Identity Construction of the Southbound Literati)', 34.

work belong to high (*ya* 雅) and low (*su* 俗) culture which had begun decades earlier among May Fourth writers on the Mainland.⁹⁶

5.2.3.3 NORTH VS. SOUTH

A recurring description of Hong Kong mentions its marginal (southern) position subject to the supremacy of northern China. Throughout the twentieth century southern localism played a pivotal role in Chinese history and functioned as the northern counterpart within the framework of Chinese cultural nationalism. This regional rivalry can be seen as a continuation of that of the late-Qing period, when the 'southern provinces, largely out of reach of Qing imperial control, could be used by various forces as testing grounds for new projects such as reformist experiments in building Western-style institutions and the revolutionary mobilization of migrants returned from overseas', whereas in contrast 'the northern provinces fell under the control of traditional imperial bureaucrats and, therefore, remained relatively uncontested in cultural and political terms'.⁹⁷

At the turn of the century North China was seen as the birthplace of the Chinese race. Chinese elites formulated a concept of Chineseness that originated in North China and from which they derived the notion of the Chinese race (*Zhonghua minzu* 中華民族).⁹⁸ By the 1930s a northern-oriented identity was pursued by both the Nationalists and their Communist rivals with their nation-building agendas as the basis of Chinese nationalism.⁹⁹ In the 1930s Japanese interventions in China led to the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese war (1937–1945) and subsequently to the first migrant flow to Hong Kong. According to Poshek Fu and Law Kar the exile community, including many Shanghai intellectuals, had established a China-centred identity drawing on a Sinocentric

⁹⁶ Pingyuan Chen, 'Literature High and Low: "Popular Fiction" in Twentieth-Century China', in *The Literary Field of Twentieth-Century China*, ed. Michel Hockx, Chinese Worlds (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 113–33.

⁹⁷ Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 103.

⁹⁸ David Yen-Ho Wu, 'The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities', in *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, ed. Wei-Ming Tu (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 148–67.

⁹⁹ Fu, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong*, 119.

sense of superiority, as described in section 4.1.1 of this study, which Fu and Law call ‘Central Plains syndrome’ (*da Zhongyuan xintai* 大中原心態). This China-centred identity originated in the re-evaluation of China’s Northern Plains as the superior and ‘primordial place of origin of Chineseness within a hierarchy of cultural differentiation’. For this reason ‘all ethnic cultures that had developed on the periphery of the Mainland’ were considered marginal or alien. Fu argues that Central Plain syndrome reinforced the identity of the exiled community in Hong Kong which, because it was ‘contaminated by British colonization, Hong Kong was seen by Chinese intellectual elites as a city of “slavishness,” “decadence,” and “backwardness”, obstructing the progress of the modern project of nationhood’.¹⁰⁰ The colonial city was for this reason seen as ‘exotic’ and ‘soulless’ and its people as ‘backward’ and ‘slavish’.¹⁰¹ The city’s backwardness made it ‘quasi-barbaric’, a view that did not change until the 1960s when a period of economic prosperity finally took off.¹⁰² Coming from Shanghai, known as the capital of Chinese modernity since the turn of the century, the exiled intellectuals maintained their feeling of cultural and intellectual superiority in Hong Kong.¹⁰³ ‘When the Shanghai intellectuals and artists came to the colony, they became *the* “Chinese”, the spokesman of the Chinese race, imposing a “slavish” otherness on the Hong Kong natives’. Among the reminiscences of Mainland literati from 1925

¹⁰⁰ Fu, 53.

¹⁰¹ Fu, 68.

¹⁰² Luo Guixiang 羅貴祥 [Lo Kwai-cheung], ‘Liu Yichang yu ziben zhuyi de shijian xing 劉以鬯與資本主義的時間性 (Liu Yichang and the Temporalities of Capitalism)’, 162–95. The British colonial government helped to boost Hong Kong’s industrial economy and ‘by end of the decade, Hong Kong’s export-oriented, labour-intensive industrial economy began to take off, providing the government with more financial resources and the population with more job opportunities’. See Mark, ‘The “Problem of People”’, 1173.

¹⁰³ According to Lee, the image of the glorious splendour Shanghai (until the 1980s it was called the “Paris of the East”) did not always match with the reality. After 1949 a well-preserved picture from the 1930s Shanghai remained in and outside Shanghai. See Li Peide 李培德 [Lee Pui-Tak], ‘Shanghai chengshi de lishi jiyi he wenhua rentong: yi 1949 nian qian de Shanghai wei taolun zhongxin 上海城市的歷史記憶和文化認同 ——以 1949 年前的上海為討論中心 (Historical Memory and Cultural Identity of the City Shanghai: A Case Study of Shanghai Before 1949)’, *Shanghai shifan daxuebao* 上海師範大學報 (*Journal of Shanghai Normal University*) 41, no. 4 (2012): 67–68.

to 1941¹⁰⁴ there is evidence of a ‘Sinicizing tendency’,¹⁰⁵ as Fu states, ‘they justified their exile in Hong Kong as a “necessary sacrifice” to sinicize the marginal culture – to enlighten the natives about their Chineseness and enjoin them to fight in China’s defense’. Furthermore, in their eyes ‘Shanghai was authentically Chinese in comparison to colonial Hong Kong’.¹⁰⁶ For example it was not Hong Kong that was on a film director’s mind when shooting a film set there, as Teo observes: ‘Hong Kong might as well not have existed. The Hong Kong depicted in their films was an abstract, cardboard city. The Shanghai émigrés were making Shanghai films – films set in that city or its environs with Hong Kong locations dressed up as its streets and quarters. Characters behaved like typical Shanghai residents, their dialogue laced with Shanghai-isms’.¹⁰⁷

Shanghai often serves as the counterpart to Hong Kong in these writers’ narratives. For instance the short story *Intersection* (1972), composed in a parallel narrative structure by the southbound writer Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, is about Shanghai and Hong Kong, epitomized as the two main protagonists Ah Xing and Chunyu Bai, a young woman and a middle-aged man who are offered several chances to meet during the plot, but instead pass by each other repeatedly and finally take off in opposite directions. Like the protagonists in the story who are mirrored as binary oppositions – female/male, young/old, future/past – Shanghai and Hong Kong are manifested as two parallel tangential strands which never converge.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], *Xianggang de youyu: wenren bixia de Xianggang (1925–1941) 香港的憂鬱: 文人筆下的香港 (1925–1941)* (The Melancholy of Hong Kong: The Literati Writings on Hong Kong) (Hong Kong: Huafeng shuju 華風書局, 1983) (italics in original).

¹⁰⁵ Sinicism that emerged in Shanghai around 1930s also influenced the Hong Kong cinema from the late 1930s to the late 1960s, according to Tan. Chinese filmmakers developed a sinicist construction of Hong Kong that was marked by ‘sinicist belligerence’ and ‘sinicist melancholia’. See Kam Tan, ‘Chinese Diasporic Imaginations in Hong Kong Films: Sinicist Belligerence and Melancholia’, *Screen* 42, no. 1 (2001): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/42.1.1>.

¹⁰⁶ Fu, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong*, 69.

¹⁰⁷ Teo also describes separation from Shanghai, the native place, as a “psychological hangover” due to the geographic, linguistic, and cultural differences between it and Hong Kong. See Teo, ‘The Shanghai Hangover: The Early Years of Mandarin Cinema in Hong Kong’, 17.

¹⁰⁸ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, *Duidao 對倒 (Intersection)*, ed. Huang Dongtao 黃東濤 (Hong Kong: Huoyi chubanshe shiye youxian gongsi 獲益出版事業有限公司 (Benefit Publishing Company), 2000);

In this regard several scholars speak of the ‘double marginality’ and ‘double impossibility’ of the status of both Hong Kong’s locals and its migrants due to the colony’s geopolitical and cultural space which gave it a hybrid identity. In Fu’s opinion, in war-time the differences between Hong Kong and China have been particularly wide in spite of commonalities of race, history, lineage, and the written language. Fu diagnoses an ‘uneasy schizophrenia’ and an ‘ambivalent hybridity’ in cinematic representations of Hong Kong. He emphasizes the ‘hegemonic discourse of China-centred nationalism and modernism’. The double marginality was ‘simultaneously ... the racist exclusion of British colonialism and the centralizing discourse of Chinese nationalism’, which made Hong Kong ‘uneasy, unsure, and tentative in projecting itself’.¹⁰⁹ The ‘uneasy schizophrenia’ stemmed from Hong Kong’s inability to identify either with the British colonials or with Chinese nationalism. This hybridity was also characteristic of Hong Kong’s identity during the Second Sino-Japanese War, amplifying the double marginality as, as Fu puts it, an ‘ambivalent mixture of here and there, tradition and modernity, urban glamour and rural simplicity, Chinese nationalism and local consciousness’.¹¹⁰

In a study of the southbound writer Liu Yichang, Luo Guixiang 羅貴祥 [Lo Kwai-cheung] observes the same double marginalization several decades later in the 1970s, leading to a vague and unclear sense of identity, when ‘holding onto a national identity was almost not an option in a colonized world, especially when nationalism might simply mean embracing the Chinese communist regime’. According to Lo, not pursuing the path of ideal ‘serious’ literature set them in a context in which they were ‘migrants in a fast-developing society in which

For the English translation, see Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, ‘Intersection’, trans. Nancy Li, *Renditions*, nos. 29 & 30 (1988): 84–101.

¹⁰⁹ Fu, *Between Shanghai and Hong Kong*, 86.

¹¹⁰ As Fu explains that ‘[u]nable to identify fully either with British colonialism or with Chinese nationalism, Hong Kong appeared to be positioned uncomfortably in between Chinese ethnicity and Western tradition, moral commitment to the “homeland” that was China and emotional attachment to the “home” that was Hong Kong’. Fu, 86–87. For instance in regard to Zhang Ailing’s novels set in Hong Kong, Lee ascertains: ‘In Chang’s fiction, Hong Kong is subjected to a double gaze: that of the English colonists and that of the Chinese from Shanghai. See Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, 325.

insisting on writing alternative literature in a commercialized world was doubly marginalized'.¹¹¹

The literary scholar Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] comes to a similar conclusion in his analysis of modern Chinese poetry written by the southbound literati as they negotiated the culture and their identity. Their poetry is indeed marked by hybridity and '[the impossibility of identifying] with the colonizer's culture as well as with an alienated national culture'.¹¹²

5.3 Literary format

The following paragraphs discuss the flourishing publishing history of Hong Kong during the 1950s, examining the different literary formats in which work was published such as the literary supplements that serialized their novels and the special column contributions. The supplements provided an important and valuable forum for the southbound literati, a cultural platform from which they were able to continue their literary work on the one hand and secure a fairly steady income on the other. Serialized fiction appearing in supplements contained specific formal and stylistic elements and enjoyed a wide readership. Examining Hong Kong's publishing field reveals how the arrival of the southbound literati was closely entwined with the increasing production of Hong Kong's print media. The chapter compares this to the development of publication by instalment in nineteenth-century Europe and how readers encountered the a serialized novel. Many literati also wrote columns for newspapers which have developed into a prevailing mode of publication with special Hong Kong characteristics.

¹¹¹ Luo Guixiang 羅貴祥 [Lo Kwai-cheung], 'Liu Yichang yu ziben zhuyi de shijian xing 劉以鬯與資本主義的時間性 (Liu Yichang and the Temporalities of Capitalism)', 175.

¹¹² Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Modern Hong Kong Poetry: Negotiation of Cultures and the Search for Identity', 240.

5.3.1 Literary supplements (*fukan* 副刊)

The five novels discussed in the following chapters appeared as instalments in newspapers and literary supplements before coming out in book form in the early and mid-1950s: for instance Cao Juren's *The Hotel* was printed in *Sing Dao Daily* from February to August 1952 and the story *Summer at Gulang Island* by Huang Sicheng appeared in the literary magazine *Everyman's Literature* in 1953. The narrative production of these migrant writers was closely entwined with the flourishing publication history of 1950s and 1960s Hong Kong. Hong Kong was one of several Chinese cities – Macao, Canton, Shanghai were the others – that had absorbed Western printing technologies at the turn of the twentieth century.¹¹³ From the 1920s onwards, with a decline during the war in the 1940s, Hong Kong's native and migrant intellectuals actively engaged in propagating artistic and literary work via the new print media.¹¹⁴ During the 1950s some twenty-one literary supplements were launched and circulated in the colonial city, joined in the 1960s by twenty more (see Illustration 5.1).¹¹⁵ In an editors' note at the beginning of *A Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969* (*Xianggang xin wenxue nianbiao* 香港新文學年表 1950–1969 年) one of the editors, Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], stresses the importance and value of literary supplements, pointing out that those studying Hong Kong literature need to consider three formats: '[f]irst the newspaper supplements, second the

¹¹³ Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937*, Contemporary Chinese Studies (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), 26.

¹¹⁴ Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, 'Cong "wenchao" (1944–1945) dao "wenyi xinchao" (1956–1959): yi tiao buke renshi de wenxue shi xiansu 從「文潮」(1944–1945)到「文藝新潮」(1956–1959)——一條不可忽視的文學史線素 (From Literary Current (1944–1945) to New Literary Current (1956–1959): A Thread of Literary History That Cannot Be Ignored)', *International Academic Conference on 'Hong Kong's Literature and Culture of the 1950s'*, Lingnan University Hong Kong, 21.-23.05.2013 (*Unpublished Conference Paper*), 2013.

¹¹⁵ For illustrations of the rise of these Hong Kong supplements, see Huang Jing 黃靜, '1950 zhi 1970 niandai Xianggang dushi xiaoshuo yanjiu 1950 至 1970 年代香港都市小說研究 (A Study on Hong Kong's Urban Novels from 1950 to 1970)', 7–46, 102–6; Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 'Cong nanmin wenxue dao Xianggang 從難民文學到香港文學 (From Migrant Literature to Hong Kong Literature)', 14.

literary magazines, and lastly the book publications'.¹¹⁶ Supplements were an important print outlet for the left-wing camp, as Luo Fu 羅孚 asserts: '[i]n the early 1950s, the left-wing did not attain any literary position other than newspaper supplements'; among other forms of mass media such as television and Cantonese opera they became an important propaganda tool.¹¹⁷

Most of the southbound literati not only wrote literature but also helped to promote literature in supplements by functioning as editors of journals. Cao Juren 曹聚仁, the author of *The Hotel*, co-edited *Sing Tao Weekly* (1951) with Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 (see Illustration 5.2). A year later Huang Sicheng 黃思騁 (*Summer at Gulang Island*) and another southbound writer, Li Kuang 力匡, also known by his pen name Bai Mu 白木 [Pei-Mo] launched the supplement *Everyman's Literature* (see Illustrations 5.3 and 5.4). His 1987 article, 'The Literary Supplements of Hong Kong in the 1950s' shows the prominence of these supplements, through which a writer could easily become well-known; he recalls an incident in the 1950s when a student, a leading figure in the *Students Literary Circle* at the time, approached him and asked what he thought of the excellent work of Xu Zhimo in comparison to his, i.e. Li Kuang's, own writing. Li Kuang thought this was a bad joke and wondered aloud how Xu Zhimo 徐志摩 (1897–1931), a famous Chinese poet, and he, a mere writer for *Everyman's Literature* and *Sing Dao Evening Post* (*Xingdao wanbao* 星島晚報), could be mentioned in

¹¹⁶ Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], *Xianggang xin wenxue nianbiao, 1950–1969 nian* 香港新文學年表, 1950–1969年 (A Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969), 9.

¹¹⁷ Luo Fu 羅孚, *Xianggang wenhua manyou* 香港文化漫遊 (*Roaming through Hong Kong's Culture*), *Jinri xianggang xilie* 今日香港系列 (Hong Kong Today Series) (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 (Zhonghua Book Company), 1993), 106. For instance the supplements like *Ta Kung Pao: Art and Literature* (*Dagong bao: wenyi* 大公報·文藝) and *Wen Wei Po: Xin wenyi* (*Wenhui bao: Xin wenyi* 文匯報·新文藝) propagated left-wing values and was therefore, a 'window' for mainland China's transmission of cultural and political values. See Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, 'Zhongguo xiandai wenxue de "haiwai" yanxu: lengzhan jiegou xia de Xianggang wenxue' 中國現代文學的“海外”延續——冷戰結構下的香港文學 (The Overseas Extension of Modern Chinese Literature: Hong Kong Literature in the Cold War Period)', 26.

the same breath.¹¹⁸ The work of Li Kuang is well known today, and he is seen as the most accomplished 1950s Hong poet Kong.¹¹⁹ Supplements that appeared together with newspapers flourished and were very popular among newspaper readers. The lasting impact of the flourishing publication industry facilitated the formation of Hong Kong's popular culture which is, as Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] notes, 'more or less related to the flourishing newspaper industry in the 1950s, the writers either acted as editors of the supplements, or contributed columns to the newspaper'.¹²⁰ The southbound poet and editor Li Kuang 力匡 states that 'regardless of whether it is a big or a small daily or evening newspaper, they all have supplements. Some supplements appear once a week, some once every three days, and there are also those that come out every day'.¹²¹ Generally the periodicals were, says Liu Shuyong 劉蜀永, a great achievement for Hong Kong literature, with fiction serialized in the literary supplements attracting a broad readership:

From the perspective of [Hong Kong's] literary forum, newspaper supplements, literary magazines and publishing houses supported the publication of literature. Newspaper supplements during that period greatly assisted the development of literature, and particularly the publication of novels. It was common for Hong Kong's newspaper supplements to put out a special edition for the publication of a serialized novel. The diverse types of writing served to attract a wide range of interested readers.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Li Kuang 力匡, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang fukan wenxue 五十年代的香港副刊文學 (The Literary Supplement of Hong Kong in the 50s)', *Xianggang wenxue 香港文學 (Hong Kong Literary)*, no. 25 (1987): 93.

¹¹⁹ Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, 'Li Kuang: wushi niandai zhimingdu zuigao de Xianggang shiren 力匡——五十年代知名度最高的香港詩人 (Li Kuang: The Most Celebrated Poet in Hong Kong's 50s)', *Chengshi wenyi 城市文藝 (Hong Kong Literature Bimonthly)* 5, no. 3 (2010): 42–50.

¹²⁰ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], "'Gaibian" de wenhua shenfen: yi wushi niandai Xianggang wenxue wei li 「改編」的文化身份：以五十年代香港文學為例 ("Re-Editing" the Cultural Identity: Taking Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s as an Example)', 59.

¹²¹ Li Kuang 力匡, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang fukan wenxue 五十年代的香港副刊文學 (The Literary Supplement of Hong Kong in the 50s)', 92.

¹²² Liu Shuyong 劉蜀永, *Jianming Xianggang shi 簡明香港史 (A Concise History of Hong Kong)*, 445.

The literary scholar and critic Huang Weiliang 黃維樑 explains that editors first came up with non-news-related matters to increase their sales: ‘Hong Kong’s newspaper supplements were flourishing, particularly from 1949 onwards. Hong Kong enjoyed considerable press freedom, but there was not enough news to fill a newspaper. To make them more competitive and attract more readers, editors increased the number of non-news subjects, with an enormous rise in supplements’.¹²³ The Hong Kong literary scholar and columnist Joseph S. M. Lau 劉紹銘 reminisces in a 2007 *Apple Daily* (Hong Kong) column titled ‘The Hong Kong Newspaper in Former Days’ (*Jiushi Xianggang de baozhi* 舊時香港的報紙) about the three most common Hong Kong broadsheets of the 1950s, *Sing Tao Daily* (*Sing Tao Ribao* 星島日報), *The Kung Sheung Daily News* (*Gongshang Ribao* 工商日報), and *Wah Kiu Yat Po/Overseas Chinese Daily News* (*Huaqiao Ribao* 華僑日報), which could be purchased for one Mao 毛 each.¹²⁴ Lau mentions that he always paid great attention to the literature and arts section. Besides that, the supplements had an attractive layout arrangement and their contribution to literature was not unnoticed. The southbound literati, says Lau, made a great effort and he found their narratives life-changing: ‘[b]ack in those days one very often saw works by the southbound literati in supplements. [They] had different educational backgrounds and different life experiences. The worldly wisdom that they put into [their] writing made me, a reader ignorant about anything beyond Hong Kong, open my eyes’. According to the literary scholar William Tay, ‘the existence of literature in Hong Kong always depended on newspaper literary

¹²³ Wu Xihe 吳錫河, ‘Dui baozhang fukan de pinggu yu qiwan: Xianggang wenxue jie “fukan yu wenhua jiaoyu” jiaoliu hui ceji 對報章副刊的評估與期望——香港文學節「副刊與文化教育」交流會側記 (Evaluation and Expectations of Newspaper Supplements: Sidelights on the Symposium of Hong Kong Literature Festival “Supplements and Cultural Education”)', *Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇 (*Hong Kong Literary Circles*), no. 31 (2004): 59.

¹²⁴ Liu Shaoming 劉紹銘, ‘Jiushi Xianggang de baozhi: Liu Shaoming (Lingnan daxue rongxiu jiaoshou) 舊時香港的報紙 - 劉紹銘 (嶺南大學榮休教授) (Hong Kong’s Newspapers in Former Times: Liu Shaoming (Professor Emeritus of Lingnan University))’, *Pingguo ribao* 蘋果日報 (*Apple Daily*), 7 October 2007, <http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/supplement/columnist/4332237/art/20071007/10255390>.

supplements, magazines, and publishing houses'.¹²⁵ In a paper 'New Access to Old Materials' published as part of the digitization project launched by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2000, Louise L. M. Chan and Leo F. H. Ma emphasize how 'literary supplements in Hong Kong newspapers are major resources on Hong Kong writers. Many prolific Hong Kong writers were either contributors to or editors of newspaper literary supplements'.¹²⁶ Yuan Dian 原甸, a southbound poet and writer for *Sing Tao Daily* (*Sing Tao Ribao* 星島日報), states in his essay 'The Importance of Supplements' (1980) that in his opinion, the supplements had a primarily educational value; they nurtured art and literature, culture, and people, especially younger generations of students.¹²⁷ The editor of the literary journal *Hong Kong Literary Circles* (*Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇), Han Wen 漢聞, observes that readers even skipped the news and went straight to the supplement: 'Daily newspaper readers do not turn to the news section: they would rather read the supplement first. Most people buy the newspaper every day to follow a special column. It is clear that newspaper supplements served as a kind of literature forum of which people were fond'.¹²⁸ Fan Shanbia 樊善標 states that the majority of the work published in the literature and arts sections of Hong Kong's supplements consisted of essays and serialized fiction, although

¹²⁵ Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], 'Colonialism, the Cold War Era, and Marginal Space. The Existential Condition of Five Decades of Hong Kong Literature', 34. Zhou Mimi and Jin Meng present a detailed overview on the most important literary journals and supplements in Hong Kong. See Zhou Mimi 周蜜蜜, 'Xianggang wenxue zazhi, baozhi wenyi fukan xunfang (xu wan) 香港文學雜誌、報紙文藝副刊巡訪 (續完) (Inquire about Hong Kong's Literary Magazines, Newspaper Supplements on Literature and Art (Complete Series))', *Xianggang zuojiabao* 香港作家報 (*Hong Kong Writers*) 12, no. 1 (1996).

¹²⁶ Leo F. H. Ma and Louise L. M. Chan, 'New Access to Old Materials: The Hong Kong Newspaper Supplements Digitization Project', in *The Impact of Digital Technology on Contemporary and Historic Newspapers: Proceedings of the International Newspaper Conference, Singapore, 1-3 April 2008, and Papers from the IFLA World Library and Information Congress, Québec, Canada, August 2008*, ed. Hartmut Walravens, IFLA Publications (München: Saur, 2008), 73.

¹²⁷ Yuan Dian 原甸, 'Fukan de zhongyao 副刊的重要 (The Importance of Supplements)', *Kaijuan yuekan* 開卷月刊 (*Open Book Monthly*) 2, no. 7 (1980): 2.

¹²⁸ Wu Xihe 吳錫河, 'Dui baozhang fukan de pinggu yu qiwang: Xianggang wenxue jie "fukan yu wenhua jiaoyu" jiaoliu hui ceji 對報章副刊的評估與期望——香港文學節「副刊與文化教育」交流會側記 (Evaluation and Expectations of Newspaper Supplements: Sidelights on the Symposium of Hong Kong Literature Festival "Supplements and Cultural Education")', 58.

the latter had emerged earlier than essays.¹²⁹ The feature that seemed to catch the readers' eye most was the supplements' layout, as discussed by writers and literary scholars, who compare the layout arrangement with 'a piece dried tofu' or 'sections of a room', the essays presented in square boxes fitted together on a huge page. Li Kuang 力匡 describes how 'Each of the four corners is set with a serialized novel, and then there is one large, or two or three, short pieces in the centre. And if there is still space some new poems are chosen to fill the gaps'.¹³⁰ In Sun Diling's 孫滌靈 description the pages are divided into 'squares the size of dried tofu which several famous authors are invited to [fill with] several hundred words every day'.¹³¹ Chen Qingfeng 陳青楓 relates how 'the so-called "column supplement" is composed like a room divided into eight or even ten big blocks. The arrangement of the position, the number of characters, and the writers are defined. And usually the supplement consists of two huge pages. The content is comprehensive and all kinds of styles abound'.¹³²

A few decades earlier it had been common for writers, including famous ones, to publish in supplements. According to Wu Yangbi 吳羊璧, 'many high-level works often first appeared in the newspaper supplement, for instance important pieces by Lun Xun 魯迅 were published in the supplement to *Beijing's Morning Post* (*Chenbao* 晨報).¹³³ Supplements in Hong Kong surely benefitted

¹²⁹ Fan Shanbiao 樊善標, 'Xianggang baozhi wenyi fukan yanjiu de huigu (shang) 香港報紙文藝副刊研究的回顧 (上) (A Review of the Study on the Literary Supplements of Hong Kong Newspapers (I))', *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 (*Hong Kong Literature Study*), no. 16 (2011): 90.

¹³⁰ Li Kuang 力匡, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang fukan wenxue 五十年代的香港副刊文學 (The Literary Supplement of Hong Kong in the 50s)', 92.

¹³¹ Sun Diling 孫滌靈, 'Wo dui Xianggang baozhi fukan de yidian chuyi 我對香港報紙副刊的一點芻議 (My Humble Opinion on Hong Kong Newspaper Supplement)', *Xingdao ribao, wenyi qixiang* 星島日報·文藝氣象 (*Sing Tao Daily*), 1993, p. 14. Chen Qingfeng also speaks about tofu-sized pieces that mesmerize novel readers. See Chen Qingfeng 陳青楓, 'Zhuanlan fukan, dajiang dong qu? 專欄副刊, 大江東去? (Special Column Supplement, a Big River of No Return?)', *Zuojia* 作家 (*Writer*), no. 39 (2005): 28.

¹³² Chen Qingfeng 陳青楓, 28.

¹³³ Wu Yangbi 吳羊璧, 'Fukan bianji zayi 副刊編輯雜憶 (Various Thoughts by a Supplement's Editor)', *Wenxue yanjiu* 文學研究 (*Literature Studies*), no. 4 (2006): 167. Also literary pieces from young Hong Kong writers who had adopted the new literary influences from Shanghai were published in newspaper supplements from the mid-1920s. The main promotion of the New Literature movement

from this long-established tradition. The southbound writer Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, comparing supplements from Hong Kong and from China points out the differences between them: '[t]he editing method for newspaper supplements is strikingly different from that of the Mainland. Hong Kong supplements require fewer modifications to the layout. The supplement I edited on the Mainland was completely different to those here: we needed to make changes on a daily basis, so we prepared a new layout every day'.¹³⁴

Supplements generally consisted of two literary genres: 'first, the serial fiction and second, the essay. In the early phase in the 1950s and 1960s serial fiction was very popular and could even fill the entire page'.¹³⁵ There has been little research on the characteristics of serial novels in Hong Kong, but they include some very well-known novels and readers are easily hooked into their plots.¹³⁶ Li Kuang 力匡 gives a brief description of the format of serialized novels and mentions the value of disseminating literature via newspaper supplements:

The long serial stories are usually novels. With 800 to 1,000 characters published a day and with (somewhat of) a plot, a story, and a climax they are different from the novels published in the evening newspapers, and are not in the style of traditional literature. Serial novels require first and foremost a 'bridge' (topic), and only secondly a plot. The faces of the protagonists are mostly those of common people found in streets and alleys. The plots are about life's daily necessities, and some of the characters strongly resemble famous people in real life. Serial fiction has raised a large readership who seek for 'literary work'.¹³⁷

occurred through the dissemination of literature and art magazines. See Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], 'Xianggang xiaoshuo de zongji: wu, liushi niandai 香港小說的蹤跡——五、六十年代 (Traces of Hong Kong Novels: The 1950, 1960s)', 13.

¹³⁴ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, 'Wo bian Xianggang baozhang wenyi fukan de jingyan 我編香港報章文藝副刊的經驗 (My Experience as an Editor for Hong Kong's Newspapers and Literature and Art Supplements)', ed. Xianggang daxue tushuguan 香港中文大學圖書館 (Chinese University of Hong Kong Library), *Chengshi wenyi 城市文藝 (Hong Kong Literature Bimonthly)* 1, no. 8 (2006): 75f.

¹³⁵ Chen Qingfeng 陳青楓, 'Zhuanlan fukan, dajiang dong qu? 專欄副刊, 大江東去? (Special Column Supplement, a Big River of No Return?)', 28.

¹³⁶ Fan Shanbiao 樊善標, 'Xianggang baozhi wenyi fukan yanjiu de huigu (xia) 香港報紙文藝副刊研究的回顧 (下) (A Review of the Study on the Literary Supplements of Hong Kong Newspapers (II))', *Wenxue Pinglun 文學評論 (Hong Kong Literature Study)*, no. 17 (2011): 113.

¹³⁷ Li Kuang 力匡, 'Wushi niandai de Xianggang fukan wenxue 五十年代的香港副刊文學 (The Literary Supplement of Hong Kong in the 50s)', 92–93. The *Sing Tao* newspaper's 'a novel a day'

And as Ma and Chan state: '[L]iterary supplements were therefore an important and valuable format where the literati could publish and express themselves, and this was especially crucial in politically turbulent periods'.¹³⁸ In the opinion of Haizi 梅子, a Hong Kong literary critic, 'the development of Hong Kong's supplements depended on literati from Mainland China, who brought their past experience of editing newspapers and supplements to Hong Kong and boosted the growth of supplements there. Also, they gradually surpassed the supplements from Mainland'.¹³⁹ In this respect the literati from the Mainland made a significant contribution to Hong Kong during the 1930s and 1950s. Zheng Guanzhe 鄭官哲 notes that during the 1930s the most outstanding works were created by the southbound literati: 'I was very glad to see at that time that strong support [for literature] was coming from the southbound literati in Hong Kong and also from friends devoted to literature and art'.¹⁴⁰ Two decades later the huge success of supplements is still owed to the literati who dominated Hong Kong's publishing field: Chen Qingfeng 陳青楓 asserts that 'running a newspaper in the fifties is, one may say, something that was done by a true cultural worker'.¹⁴¹ Migrant writers

project (*meiri yi xiaoshuo* 每日一小說) in its supplement *Milky Way* (Tian He 天河), publishing stories of up to 2000 characters; it lasted for a little over a year. See Huai Wen 懷文, 'Linglei xiao xiaoshuo: jiedu baozhi fukan 另類小小說——解讀報紙副刊 (Another Type of Small Novels: Interpretations of Newspaper Supplements)', *Dushuren* 讀書人 (*Reader*) 4, no. 26 (1997): 88–89.

¹³⁸ Ma and Chan, 'New Access to Old Materials: The Hong Kong Newspaper Supplements Digitization Project', 74. The newspaper *Lih Pao* (*Li bao* 立報), for instance, moved from Shanghai to Hong Kong after the „Battle of Shanghai“ in 1937. Zheng Guanzhe 鄭官哲, 'Mantan Xianggang kangzhan wenyi fukan 漫談香港抗戰文藝副刊 (Chatting about the Hong Kong's Literature and Art Supplements during the War of Resistance)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 98 (1993): 32.

¹³⁹ Wu Xihe 吳錫河, 'Dui baozhang fukan de pinggu yu qiwang: Xianggang wenxue jie “fukan yu wenhua jiaoyu” jiaoliu hui ceji 對報章副刊的評估與期望——香港文學節「副刊與文化教育」交流會側記 (Evaluation and Expectations of Newspaper Supplements: Sidelights on the Symposium of Hong Kong Literature Festival “Supplements and Cultural Education”)', 59.

¹⁴⁰ Zheng Guanzhe 鄭官哲, 'Mantan Xianggang kangzhan wenyi fukan 漫談香港抗戰文藝副刊 (Chatting about the Hong Kong's Literature and Art Supplements during the War of Resistance)', 32.

¹⁴¹ Chen Qingfeng 陳青楓, 'Zhuanlan fukan, dajiang dong qu? 專欄副刊, 大江東去? (Special Column Supplement, a Big River of No Return?)', 29.

who had previously written for newspapers and journals in China continued their work in exile. Wu Yangbi 吳羊璧 makes a careful attempt to divide those who wrote for the newspaper supplement *Wen Wei Po* 文匯報 into three categories: first, writers formerly linked to *Wenhui Bao* who had moved to Hong Kong from Shanghai and Beijing; second, local Hong Kong writers; and third, writers who were selected from manuscripts submitted by readers.¹⁴²

As well as the question of whether the column genre can be considered literature, some literary critics ask the same about serial fiction, arguing that the supplement format destroys the linearity of the plot, and that the supplement as a mass-selling product inevitably has an effect on the narrative structure. The writer Gao Xiong 高雄, also known by his pen names San Su 三蘇 and Shi De 史得, disapproved of the format of serial fiction. In a 1961 column 'Writings for Young People: On the Serial Novel', he criticizes the style of writing, which makes the plot appear 'scattered and smashed' (*zhili posui* 支離破碎), and assigns the serial novel to the category of popular literature (*tongsu xiaoshuo* 通俗小說), as it was aimed at a mass readership.¹⁴³ For example the poor quality of the literature printed in *Sing Tao Weekly* was due to the commercial publications that infiltrated elements of literature.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Wu Yangbi 吳羊璧, 'Fukan bianji zayi 副刊編輯雜憶 (Various Thoughts by a Supplement's Editor', 170. Besides *Wen Wei Po* (*Wenhui bao* 文匯報), *Tianyan Daily* (*Tianyan ribao* 天演日報), *Shun Pao* (*Shenbao* 申報), *Lih Pao* (*Li bao* 立報), *Nationals Evening News* (*Guomin wanbao* 國民晚報), *Sing Tao Evening News* (*Xingdao wanbao* 星島晚報), *Shishi Evening News* (*Shishi wanbao* 時事晚報), *Chuang Hua Times* (*Zhonghua shibao* 中華時報), *Sing Pao Daily News* (*Chengbao* 成報), *Sing Tao Weekly* (*Xingdao zhoubao* 星島周報), *Huashang Daily* (*Huashang bao* 華商報) made the transition to Hong Kong in the 1930s in the course of the Sino-Japanese war. See Wu Shanghua 吳尚華, *Taigang Wenxue Yanjiu* 台港文學研究 (*Study on Taiwan and Hong Kong Literature*), 171.

¹⁴³ Shi De 史得 [San Su 三蘇], 'Gei qingnian xie zuozhe: guanyu changpian lianzai 給青年寫作者: 關於長篇連載 (To Young Writers: On Full-Length Serial (Publications))', *Wenhui bao: wenyi Yu qingnian* 文匯報: 文藝與青年 (*Wen wei po: Arts and Youth*), 2 August 1961.

¹⁴⁴ Xu Dingming 許定銘, 'Wushi niandai de "xingdao zhoubao" 五十年代的「星島周報」(*Sing Tao Weekly* in the 1950s)', *Zuojia* 作家 (*Writer*), no. 40 (2005): 110.

5.3.2 *Instalment fiction*

The literary supplement attracted a large readership and was strongly intertwined with the growing eminence and success of the southbound literati. For the purposes of this study it is important to be aware of the formal and stylistic elements of serialized fiction which were the regular fare of this dominant mode of publication. Its publication in daily, weekly, or monthly instalments in a newspaper or literary supplement strongly influenced how readers encountered a text, and at the same time met the economic interests of both readers and publishers. As Perry Link points out, serialized fiction is 'a less expensive source of fiction than books and magazines ... the total cost would not be different, but the feeling of affordability would be present because each daily outlay seemed unimportantly small. And since there were, of course, many other good reasons for buying a newspaper, getting to read a novel could be viewed as a kind of bonus'. Serialization can hook readers into a story, ensuring not only their loyalty to the newspaper but also that they avoid missing a single issue.¹⁴⁵

In nineteenth-century Europe publication by instalment came to, for instance France via the *roman-feuilleton* (serial literature), which gave rise to the French newspaper,¹⁴⁶ while in Britain serialized fiction reached its heyday in the Victorian era with novelists such as William Thackeray (1811–1863), Charles Dickens (1812–1870) Anthony Trollope (1815–1882), and George Eliot (1819–1880). For instance Dickens' novels *Oliver Twist* (1838) and *David Copperfield* (1849–1850) were published in parts, as was that quintessential coming-of age story *Great Expectations* (1861).¹⁴⁷ Instalment fiction is often mentioned in the context of commercialized literature; the literary critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve characterizes the popular serialized novel as the 'industrial novel'.¹⁴⁸ Serial fiction targeted a growing literate middle class who could buy novels in parts

¹⁴⁵ E. Perry Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), 151.

¹⁴⁶ Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, 146.

¹⁴⁷ Carol A. Martin, *George Eliot's Serial Fiction*, *Studies in Victorian Life and Literature* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1994), 1–3.

¹⁴⁸ Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, 143.

more cheaply than as expensive bound volumes. Although originally long and expensive works such as the Bible, religious tracts, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, and scientific and religious books were published in parts, in Britain newspapers and periodicals started to publish serial essays and stories in the early eighteenth century.¹⁴⁹ This type of publishing had certain benefits for their publishing houses as well as for the readers, whereas writers were faced with the pressures of space – structuring each part logically, fitting it satisfactorily on its allotted page, and keeping the readers in suspense – as well as time – meeting the printing deadline. Overall the publishing houses profited from this marketing device. One of the advantages was that they received the profits immediately on publication of the first part, which they could then use to finance the printing of the following part.¹⁵⁰ Another side benefit was that it was an economical and profitable way to run a printing house, as ‘serial publication offered a means of setting up a regular production schedule with a predictable and even supply of manuscripts to print’.¹⁵¹ It was also a good opportunity to promote new and undiscovered writers, and publishers ‘were more willing to take a chance on a new author because they could drop the work if it proved unsuccessful’.¹⁵²

The relationship between author and public was more intimate than in the case of a one-volume publication, and ‘the period between instalments created a distinctive relationship between the public and the author and text. Serialization gave readers more time than they had with the usual three-volume novel to contemplate and discuss a new work, and each period of contemplation reinforced their expectations of coming events and character developments’.¹⁵³ Readers became involved with the characters and were more engaged in the plot

¹⁴⁹ Martin, *George Eliot’s Serial Fiction*, 6, 8.

¹⁵⁰ Martin, 9.

¹⁵¹ Mary Hamer, *Writing by Numbers: Trollope’s Serial Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 20.

¹⁵² Martin, *George Eliot’s Serial Fiction*, 12.

¹⁵³ Martin, 27, 260. Also the line between fact and fiction became blurred. Readers would treat the characters as if they were real or current news would become entangled with the fictitious plot. See Martin, 247; Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, 164f.

development due to the possibility for reader-response in the form of letters which in turn 'illuminated the distinctive aesthetics of serial texts'.¹⁵⁴

The writer faced different kinds of pressures, but chiefly those of space (for each serial parts) and structure, as Carol Martin asserts: '[a] major problem for serial writers was how to structure the parts. Each part had to be both a whole and part of the larger design. Each also needed a suspenseful ending to induce readers to purchase the next instalment'.¹⁵⁵ Part-publication also entailed a constant struggle and tension for writers striving to meet the recurring deadlines.¹⁵⁶ A challenge for the novelists was reconciling the artistry with the commercial demands that accompanied these 'commodity-texts' and its structure that controls the publication of texts.¹⁵⁷

In China the instalment form can be traced back to the last two decades of the Qing dynasty. Perry Link notes that in Shanghai serialization had been unproblematically adopted by the press due to the earlier Chinese tradition of writing vernacular literature in 'linked chapters' (*zhanghui* 章回):

The key role of newspaper fiction in the development of both newspapers and popular fiction cannot be separated from the fact of its serialization. In fiction magazines of the Ch'ing, serialization had been practiced simply as an expedient for publishing too lengthy to appear in a single issue. But when newspapers began serializing fiction, the device took on an economic logic for both readers and publishers. The 'tension-and-curtain' format left readers at the end of each day's episode with maximum of curiosity for the next day's continuation.¹⁵⁸

Referring to the 'linked chapter' in Ming and Qing vernacular fiction, Alexander des Forges argues that 'instalment fiction could use the characteristic formulas

¹⁵⁴ Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, 'Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia', in *Serial Literature*, ed. Sally Mitchell (Chicago: St. James Press, 1988), 705.

¹⁵⁵ Martin, *George Eliot's Serial Fiction*, 24, 29.

¹⁵⁶ William Thackeray was also the illustrator for his own stories and therefore, had to meet the deadlines for both manuscripts and the illustrations. Edgar Frederick Harden, *The Emergence of Thackeray's Serial Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 10; Hamer, *Writing by Numbers*, 22.

¹⁵⁷ Norman Nicholas Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), 1–17.

¹⁵⁸ Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, 151–52.

to open and close chapters to leave the reader in suspense at the end of an episode and encourage him or her to buy the next episode when it became available. With instalment fiction, each chapter would have a climax and a hook to lead the reader into the text'.¹⁵⁹ This narrative format, then, generated a significant relationship between public, author and text.

Furthermore, the text engaged with the reader's daily life by absorbing and visualizing news items, possibly scoops by the same newspaper, and incorporating them into the storylines of serialized fiction.¹⁶⁰ Drawing on Benedict Anderson's notion of simultaneity,¹⁶¹ Le Forges argues that the dimension of the imagined community also exists in the consumption of serialized novels: 'As fiction published in parts and in close association with daily papers (often *in* them) ... these instalment narratives both represented simultaneity and were consumed simultaneously'.¹⁶² Wang Jiaqi 王家祺 also draws on this idea, stating that nostalgia united the migrant writers which 'was based on the collective situation of this generation and its collective ethnic identity. We can say that the southbound literati constructed a collective identity imagination through a common nostalgic act. Its imaginary community was formed by means of a collective nostalgic writing (and reading) of such newspapers and periodicals'.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Alexander Des Des Forges, 'Building Shanghai, One Page at a Time: The Aesthetics of Installment Fiction at the Turn of the Century', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62, no. 3 (2003): 790, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3591860>.

¹⁶⁰ Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies*, 22.

¹⁶¹ Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 2006), 22–36.

¹⁶² Alexander Townsend Des Forges, *Mediasphere Shanghai: The Aesthetics of Cultural Production*, Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 78 (brackets in original).

¹⁶³ Wang Jiaqi 王家祺, "'Wo de xin reng zai beifang de gaoyuan": cong "hailan" kan wushi niandai nanlai zuojia de wenxue shengchan 「我的心仍在北方的高原」——從「海瀾」看五十年代南來作家的文學生產 ("My Heart Still Belongs to the North Plateau": The Literary Output of the Southbound Literati in the 1950s from the Perspective of "Hailan")', 101.

5.3.3 Column writings (*zhuanlan* 專欄)

The column sections of newspapers were very popular and received a great deal of attention, especially in the 1960s and 1970s when Hong Kong's thriving newspaper industry reached its peak. In the 1950s, serial novels and columns were highly valued and vastly popular, although the pieces became obsolete as fast as they were produced (*suisheng suimie* 隨生隨滅).¹⁶⁴ These columns gave rise to a particular genre in Hong Kong, the short column essay (*zhuanlan zawen* 專欄雜文), which enjoyed widespread popularity in the 1980s. Due to the diversity of subjects and freedom of style and of choice of words, this is considered a distinctively Hong Kong literary phenomenon.¹⁶⁵

In a conversation between the two screenplay writers and columnists Huang Zicheng 黃子程 and Wu Hao 吳昊, the latter notes that the earliest columns in Hong Kong were pornographic and that the majority had a romantic setting with a lively depiction. According to Wu these characteristics can be traced back to the literary tradition of popular literature in the style of the Saturday School (*libailiu pai* 禮拜六派) and the Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies School of fiction (*yuanyang hudie* 鴛鴦蝴蝶) that flourished in modern cities such as Shanghai.¹⁶⁶ The essay in column format belongs, with other genre such as marital arts novels, science fiction, and romantic novels, to the category of popular literature. Huang Weiliang 黃維樑 considers it to be the heart, the

¹⁶⁴ Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], and Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], *Xianggang xin wenxue nianbiao, 1950–1969 nian* 香港新文學年表, 1950–1969 年 (A Chronology of Hong Kong Modern Literature 1950–1969), 9.

¹⁶⁵ Huang's English translation of the term (*zhuanlan zawen* 專欄雜文) is 'short miscellaneous essay'. Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, 'The Short Miscellaneous Essay with Hong Kong Characteristics', in *The Modern Chinese Literary Essay: Defining the Chinese Self in the 20th Century (Conference Volume)*, ed. Martin Woesler, China Science & Scholarship (Bochum: Bochum University Press, 2000), 291–308.

¹⁶⁶ Zhang Wenzhong 張文中, 'Zhuanlan: Xianggang weiyi de wenxue: Huang Zicheng de wenxue 專欄: 香港唯一的文學——黃子程的文學 (Special Columns: Hong Kong's Only Literature: Literature by Huang Zicheng)', *Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇 (*Hong Kong Literary Circles*), no. 4 (2002): 52.

‘strategic position’, of Hong Kong’s popular literature (*Xianggang tongsu wenxue de zhongzhen* 香港通俗文學的重鎮).¹⁶⁷

The column style of the 1960s was clearly inspired and boosted by Mainland migrant writers who, as Zhang Junmo 張君默 says, were easily able to produce a thousand characters on a daily basis.¹⁶⁸ While column-writing originated in Mainland China, over time it became a genuine Hong Kong style reaching a mass readership, which in turn may have affected its literary quality. It is disputable whether Hong Kong newspaper columns offer a genuine local style of writing which can be found nowhere else in China, as stated by Xia Yan 夏衍 (1900–1995) in the preface to Huang Guliu’s 黃谷柳 novel *The Story of Shrimp Ball* Xia Yan remembers a casual dinner with Huang Guliu during which the latter was offered the opportunity to publish his manuscript as a serial novel. Huang was happy to give this format an honest try, as Xia Yan recalls:

I told him that he could publish this long passage as a serial in a newspaper supplement, although I made a very demanding request of him, that he should make changes according to the style of serialized novels in newspapers: divide it into small sections of a thousand characters each and keep the plot exciting. He was pleased to agree and said: ‘I’m going to learn from those Hong Kong linked-chapter novelists; this is such a good opportunity to practice.’¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, *Xianggang wenxue chutan* 香港文學初探 (*An Initial Exploration of Hong Kong Literature*), 3. Zhao Xifang lists three categories of popular literature in Hong Kong: “Shady stories” (*Heimu xiaoshuo* 黑幕小說), “Mandarin Ducks and Butterfly fiction” (*Yuanyang hudiepai xiaoshuo* 鴛鴦蝴蝶派小說) and “New tales” (*Xinchuanqi xiaoshuo* 新傳奇小說). See Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, ‘Zhongguo xiandai wenxue de “haiwai” yanxu: lengzhan jiegou xia de Xianggang wenxue 中國現代文學的“海外”延續——冷戰結構下的香港文學 (The Overseas Extension of Modern Chinese Literature: Hong Kong Literature in the Cold War Period)’. For further discussion on the essay in column format and its significance in Hong Kong literature, see Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, ‘The Short Miscellaneous Essay with Hong Kong Characteristics’, 293–96.

¹⁶⁸ Zhang Junmo 張君默, ‘Fukan zhuanlan: wo de meng 副刊專欄——我的夢 (Special Columns in Supplements: My Dream)’, *Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇 (*Hong Kong Literary Circles*), no. 1 (2002): 17.

¹⁶⁹ Huang Guliu 黃谷柳 and Xia Yan 夏衍, ‘Yi Guliu: chongyin “xiaqiu zhuan” daixu 憶谷柳——重印「蝦球傳」代序 (Guliu Remembered: An Introduction to the Reprint of *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)’, in *Xiaqiu zhuan* 蝦球傳 (*The Story of Shrimp Ball*) (Guangzhou 廣州: Guangdong renmin chubanshe 廣東人民出版社, 1979), 2.

According to this anecdote Huang Guliu considered Hong Kong writers skilled in creating instalment fiction. There are diverging opinions on whether the column style of writing can be considered a genuine area of Hong Kong literature, with claims that ‘the newspaper column is the product of a particular part of Hong Kong society’.¹⁷⁰ This underlines the general opinion that for many years (in the late 1990s) columns were regarded as one of the greatest characteristics of Hong Kong local culture in terms of the emergence of print media.¹⁷¹ The columnist Huang Zicheng 黃子程 is convinced that they have a unique status in Hong Kong literature, stating: ‘I still consider columns the only kind of literature in Hong Kong’.¹⁷² On the other hand there is harsh disapproval of this assertion; for instance Sun Diling 孫滌靈 argues that the column is not a particular Hong Kong literary product.¹⁷³ As Huang Weiliang 黃維樑 remembers: ‘yet for some people this frame-sized essay, a kind of “newspaper’s butt” (*bao pigu de dongxi* 「報屁股」的東西) cannot be considered literature’. This viewpoint is partly owed to the fact that the columnists were free to choose how and about what they wrote, since there were no established standards in terms of content and style: ‘regarding the content, the column’s coverage is quite broad’.¹⁷⁴ This very loose style of writing included the language used which, according to Huang Zicheng’s description, could contain various dialects. Moreover, ‘these newspapers allot an entire page to the special columns, with eight or nine authors assigned to write a

¹⁷⁰ Han Wen 漢聞, ‘Xianggang baozhi zhuanlan mianmian guan 香港報紙專欄面面觀 (A Comprehensive Survey on Hong Kong’s Newspaper Columns)’, *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 100 (1993): 32.

¹⁷¹ Zhang Wenzhong 張文中, ‘Zhuanlan: Xianggang weiyi de wenxue: Huang Zicheng de wenxue 專欄: 香港唯一的文學——黃子程的文學 (Special Columns: Hong Kong’s Only Literature: Literature by Huang Zicheng)’, 51.

¹⁷² Zhang Wenzhong 張文中, 56.

¹⁷³ Sun Diling 孫滌靈, ‘Dui dangqian Xianggang baozhi zhuanlan de yixie kanfa 對當前香港報紙專欄的一些看法 (Some Views on Hong Kong’s Current Newspaper’s Special Columns)’, *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 164 (1998): 30.

¹⁷⁴ Han Wen 漢聞, ‘Xianggang baozhi zhuanlan mianmian guan 香港報紙專欄面面觀 (A Comprehensive Survey on Hong Kong’s Newspaper Columns)’, 32.

column ... some of them write in Cantonese and others write in classical Chinese, but the majority write in vernacular style. A mix of a variety [of languages]'.¹⁷⁵

For example in his early years the writer Gao Xiong 高雄, commonly known by his pen name 三蘇 San Su, used a *mélange* of the vernacular (*baihua* 白話), classical Chinese (*wenyan* 文言), and Cantonese (*yuayu* 粵語) in his column 'A Broker's Diary' (*Jingji riji* 經紀日記).¹⁷⁶ This style, called 'three-tiered literature' (*sanjidi wenxue* 三及第語言), originated in the rhythmic narrative chants called 'wooden fish songs' (*muyu ge* 木魚歌).¹⁷⁷ Three-tiered literature emerged in the 1940s and was 'highly popular among the general public, who find these narratives lively and easy to digest'.¹⁷⁸ Three-tiered literature, states Zhang Jiajun 張嘉俊, is closely connected to and mirrors the diversity in Hong Kong society in the 1950s and 1960s due to the migrant influx.¹⁷⁹

Three-tiered literature had a strong attraction for newspaper readers and flourished in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Gao Xiong 高雄 in particular contributed hugely to its dissemination by publishing his columns and essays in renowned newspapers such as *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報 and *Ming Bao* 明報. In addition, from 1947 to 1949 left-wing writers from the Mainland advocated a Dialect Literature Movement (DLM) allowing work in pure dialect to reach a mass

¹⁷⁵ Zhang Wenzhong 張文中, 'Zhuanlan: Xianggang weiyi de wenxue: Huang Zicheng de wenxue 專欄: 香港唯一的文學——黃子程的文學 (Special Columns: Hong Kong's Only Literature: Literature by Huang Zicheng)', 52.

¹⁷⁶ Chen Dejin 陳德錦, 'Xianggang zhuanlan wenxue xianxiang 香港專欄文學現象 (The Phenomenon of Hong Kong's Special Column Literature)', *Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇 (*Hong Kong Literary Circles*), no. 3 (2002): 13.

¹⁷⁷ Huang Zhongming 黃仲鳴, *Xianggang san jidi wenti liubian shi* 香港三及第文體流變史 (The History of Development and Change of Hong Kong's Three-Tiered Literary Form), 1st ed. (Hong Kong: Xianggang zhuojia xiehui 香港作家協會 (Hong Kong Writers Association), 2002), 31–33.

¹⁷⁸ The term 'three-tiered literature' derives from the rice pots in which 'three-tiered rice' is cooked, the latter '[invoking] inexperienced housewives who prepare a pot of rice in three stages of cooking: the uncooked, the thoroughly cooked, and the burnt'. Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Writing across Borders: Hong Kong's 1950s and the Present', 32.

¹⁷⁹ Zhang Jiajun 張嘉俊, 'San Su xiaoshuo yanjiu (1950 niandai) 三蘇小說研究 (1950 年代) (Study on San Su's Novels (1950s))' (master's thesis, Lingnan University, 2009), 27. For further discussion, see Zhang Jiajun 張嘉俊, 25–29.

Hong Kong readership.¹⁸⁰ They also used vernacular writing to support the Communist Party, whose agenda was to produce literature for the masses, in particular peasants and workers.¹⁸¹ In Hong Kong the movement was chiefly led by migrant intellectuals from the Mainland with writings in dialects such as Guangzhou, Chaozhou, and Hakka until the early 1950s, when the Communist Party criticized and suppressed the promotion and dissemination of dialects.¹⁸² This resulted in the virtual disappearance of written Cantonese from Mainland China. The British government in Hong Kong, on the other hand, was chiefly neutral, and the colony's school administrators and publishers were able to decide for themselves which Chinese dialect to opt for in terms of publications and school administration. According to Donald B. Snow, Cantonese had a long and unbroken period of development in Hong Kong due to the absence of government interference, whereas for instance the government in Taiwan opposed the dissemination of written Taiwanese for a long time.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Huang Zhongming 黃仲鳴, 'Xianggang baozhi fukan de sanjidi wenxue 香港報紙副刊的三及第文學 (The Three-Tiered Literature in Hong Kong's Newspaper Supplements)', *Zuojia 作家 (Writer)*, no. 19 (2003): 146–49.

¹⁸¹ Donald Snow, 'A Short History of Published Cantonese: What is a Dialect Literature?', *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* 4, no. 3 (1993): 134. The writers Mao Dun 茅盾 and Guo Moruo 郭沫沫 strongly advocated for this movement, although they also saw the contradiction between popularization on the one hand and preserving the local flavour of Cantonese on the other. See Mao Dun 茅盾, 'Zaitan "Fangyan wenxue" 再談「方言文學」 (Another Talk on "Dialect Literature")', *Dazhong wenyi congkan 大眾文藝叢刊 (Popular Literary Magazine)*, no. 1 (1 March 1948): 34–39; Jing Wen 靜聞, 'Fangyan wenxue de chuanguo 方言文學的創作 (The Production of Dialect Literature)', *Dazhong wenyi congkan 大眾文藝叢刊 (Popular Literary Magazine)*, no. 3 (1 July 1948): 17–24. For further discussion on the Dialect Movement. See Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], 'Zhanhou Xianggang fangyan wenxue yundong de yixie wenti 戰後香港「方言文學」運動的一些問題 (A Few Questions on the "Dialect Movement" in Post-War Hong Kong)', in *Wenxue de chuantong yu xiandai 文學的傳統與現代 (Tradition and Modernity in Literature)* (Hong Kong: Huahan wenhua shiye gongsi 華漢文化事業公司, 1988), 158–72; Zheng Guanzhe 鄭官哲, 'Sishi niandai fangyan wenxue de huigu 四十年代方言文學的回顧 (Review on the Dialect Literature of the 1940s)', *Xianggang wenxue 香港文學 (Hong Kong Literary)*, no. 90 (5 June 1992): 62–63.

¹⁸² Hou Guixin 侯桂新, 'Zhanhou Xianggang fangyan wenxue yundong kaolun 戰後香港方言文學運動考論 (On Hong Kong's Post-War Dialect Literature Movement)', *Journal of Shanxi Datong University, Social Science 山西大同大學學報, 社會科學版* 28, no. 3 (2014): 43–48.

¹⁸³ Snow, 'A Short History of Published Cantonese: What Is a Dialect Literature?', 18–19.

The columns' brevity made it easy to consume the text in bite-size chunks, which was important, according to literary scholars, given the massive number and astonishing variety of the supplements. According to 1937 official statistics, Hong Kong newspapers had over 500 kinds of special columns.¹⁸⁴ The hectic urban lifestyle had led to a shift in how news was consumed, and newspapers were faced with the task of shortening their columns and columnists were restricted to scripts of maximum 600 or 700 characters.¹⁸⁵ Han Wen 漢聞 notes that the column's form is 'concise and forceful, with the number of characters ranging from 200 or 300 to 700 or 800. Every reader needed just two minutes to finish the text in one breath'. But the limit of 300 to 800 characters was not easy for a columnist as it interrupted the flow of the story.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, the number of characters gave the column section its specific page layout in small frames (*kuang* 框框) reminiscent of 'a rectangular and framed construction site' (*fanguai* 方塊; *kuang kuang* 框框; *dipan* 地盤).¹⁸⁷

Although there was no specific style sheet for manuscripts and columnists were free to submit any essay as long as it was no longer than seven to eight hundred characters, they were expected to try to meet a certain literary standard. It was difficult for editors to maintain the quality of submissions at a constant level, as the writers could choose to pursue a high literary standard or not.¹⁸⁸ Sun Diling 孫滌靈 argues that editors tended to print their columns whatever the

¹⁸⁴ Sun Diling 孫滌靈, 'Dui dangqian Xianggang baozhi zhuanlan de yixie kanfa 對當前香港報紙專欄的一些看法 (Some Views on Hong Kong's Current Newspaper's Special Columns)', 31.

¹⁸⁵ Feng Weicai 馮偉才, 'Xianggang de zhuanlan wenhua 香港的專欄文化 (Hong Kong's Column Culture)', *Dushuren* 讀書人 (*Reader*) 6, no. 4 (1995): 103; Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 'Xianggang baozhi fukan zhuanlan de bianqian 香港報紙副刊專欄的變遷 (Changes of the Columns in Hong Kong's Newspaper Supplements)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 100 (1993): 42.

¹⁸⁶ Han Wen 漢聞, 'Xianggang baozhi zhuanlan mianmian guan 香港報紙專欄面面觀 (A Comprehensive Survey on Hong Kong's Newspaper Columns)', 31–32.

¹⁸⁷ Chen Dejin 陳德錦, 'Xianggang zhuanlan wenxue Xianxiang 香港專欄文學現象 (The Phenomenon of Hong Kong's Special Column Literature)', 13; Fan Shanbiao 樊善標, 'Xianggang baozhi wenyi fukan yanjiu de huigu (shang) 香港報紙文藝副刊研究的回顧 (上) (A Review of the Study on the Literary Supplements of Hong Kong Newspapers (I))', 90.

¹⁸⁸ Feng Weicai 馮偉才, 'Xianggang de zhuanlan wenhua 香港的專欄文化 (Hong Kong's Column Culture)', 100.

quality of the essays, quoting Huang Weiliang's 黃維樑 discussion on special columns: 'columns are generally about ordinary figures and ordinary matters for an undemanding ordinary readership'.¹⁸⁹ He points out that 'the column style lacks true feeling and pays no attention to writing skills; for this reason it cannot be considered literature'.¹⁹⁰ According to Xiong Zhiqin 熊志琴 this was due to the media setting, which created a certain consumer/reader mentality; yet he also takes the writers' harsh living conditions into consideration:

The essays in the special columns of Hong Kong's newspapers are not considered high quality, let alone artistic achievements. They are a kind of 'townspeople's essay' that must fit into the daily publication, and they require intensive production, which is why they can hardly be excellent pieces. Some of the highly productive literati are guilty of producing rough and slipshod work.¹⁹¹

Overall 'the supplement's characteristics mainly reflect society; in fact it is an instant reflection of society that becomes meaningless the following day'. The column section was not of prime importance to the newspaper publishing houses, since the section aimed at pulling readers in was usually at the front of the newspaper.¹⁹² The editor and the writers shared the weighty responsibility for selecting and creating a column section that would captivate the readers,

¹⁸⁹ Sun Diling 孫滌靈, 'Dui dangqian Xianggang baozhi zhuanlan de yixie kanfa 對當前香港報紙專欄的一些看法 (Some Views on Hong Kong's Current Newspaper's Special Columns)', 30–31.

¹⁹⁰ Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, 'Xianggang zhuanlan tonglun 香港專欄通論 (On Hong Kong's Special Column)', *Xin bao 信報 (Hong Kong Economic Journal)*, 7./8./9 1988. Huang does not condemn the columns so fiercely in *An Initial Exploration of Hong Kong Literature (香港文學初探)* (1987), and admits that one cannot expect column writers 'to produce pearls and jade with each piece of writing'. See Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, *Xianggang wenxue chutan 香港文學初探 (An Initial Exploration of Hong Kong Literature)*, 34.

¹⁹¹ Xiong Zhiqin 熊志琴, 'Daodi shi Shanghai ren?: Du Si Ming wuliushi niandai Xianggang "xinsheng wanbao" zhuanlan (1) 到底是上海人? ——讀司明五六十年代香港「新生晚報」專欄 (1) (A Shanghai after All?: Reading Si Ming's Columns in "Xinsheng Wanbao" of the 1950s and 1960s (1))', *Xianggang wenxue 香港文學 (Hong Kong Literary)*, no. 333 (2012): 36.

¹⁹² Zhang Wenzhong 張文中, 'Zhuanlan: Xianggang weiyi de wenxue: Huang Zicheng de wenxue 專欄: 香港唯一的文學——黃子程的文學 (Special Columns: Hong Kong's Only Literature: Literature by Huang Zicheng)', 53.

although it was hard to satisfy the tastes and popular interests of all the readers.¹⁹³ The columns generally offered a variety of topics: 'one can get to read a dozen different opinions in a day; that is not easy. Columns provide a forum with different views'.¹⁹⁴

Although each editor was responsible for differentiating his or her newspaper from the others, although such differentiation was very loose until the 1990s, and to offer exciting topics catering for the readers' tastes.¹⁹⁵ The columns received a lot of attention from literary scholars, some condemning their lack of seriousness. They were a quick read in any circumstance, taking the reader 'a minute or even ten seconds to finish reading a column. It can be in a dining room, a teahouse, a restaurant, while riding on the ferry or in a washroom. You read it on the spot and you discard it on the spot. You read it right away and you forget it right away'.¹⁹⁶ To Si Guo 思果 they stood for excessive consumption by a mass readership, [like] the food in a fast-food restaurant. Many people like to eat it; nobody has to worry about the customers. But think about the taste; you probably won't drool'.¹⁹⁷ It was therefore rather intended to be a daily diversion together with chunks of the latest news; in this regard they 'represent other "voices"'. When the reader opens the supplement it is as a way to squander time'.¹⁹⁸ Despite being a form of escapist entertainment, much thought was given to its unique characteristics. In a 1988 article in the renowned newspaper *Ming Bao* 明報 the writer Ah Nong 阿濃 presents seven key words on Hong Kong's special column

¹⁹³ Chen Bingliang 陳炳良, 'Bianzhe, zuozhe, duzhe: tantan Xianggang de zhuanlan xiezuozhe 編者、作者、讀者——談談香港的專欄寫作 (Editor, Writer, Reader: A Chat about Hong Kong's Special Column Writings)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 79 (1991): 4.

¹⁹⁴ Feng Weicai 馮偉才, 'Xianggang de zhuanlan wenhua 香港的專欄文化 (Hong Kong's Column Culture)', 101.

¹⁹⁵ Zhang Wenzhong 張文中, 'Zhuanlan: Xianggang weiyi de wenxue: Huang Zicheng de wenxue 專欄：香港唯一的文學——黃子程的文學 (Special Columns: Hong Kong's Only Literature: Literature by Huang Zicheng)', 52.

¹⁹⁶ Huang Weiliang 黃維樑, *Xianggang wenxue chutan* 香港文學初探 (An Initial Exploration of Hong Kong Literature), 3.

¹⁹⁷ Si Guo 思果, 'Tan zhuanlan wenzhang 談專欄文章 (Talks on Special Columns Essays)', *Xianggang zuojiabao* 香港作家報 (*Hong Kong Writers*) 27, no. 8 (n.d.): 1997.

¹⁹⁸ Chen Dejin 陳德錦, 'Xianggang zhuanlan wenxue xianxiang 香港專欄文學現象 (The Phenomenon of Hong Kong's Special Column Literature)', 14.

writing: ‘many’ (*duo* 多), ‘brief’ (*duan* 短), ‘quick’ (*kuai* 快), ‘abundant’ (*fu* 富), ‘free’ (*fang* 放), ‘new’ (*xin* 新), and ‘excessive’ (*lan* 濫). Many (*duo* 多) refers to the many columns and essays published, which numbered approximately three hundred pieces a day. Most of the pieces were brief (*duan* 短), with just two hundred to a thousand characters, and were published quickly (*kuai* 快) because the columnists reacted almost instantly to the events of the day; there was an abundance (*fu* 富) of different styles, as the writers were free to express themselves in any way they chose, leading to the fifth characteristic; no topic was forbidden and columnists could choose their subject freely (*fang* 放 as in *daming defang* 大鳴大放) and express whatever was on their mind (*changsuo yuyan* 暢所欲言). This encouraged writers to explore new topics (*xin* 新) in essays with, for instance, sections on economic or travel. The last feature was the columnists’ excess of (*lan* 濫) writings produced with no interest in quality.¹⁹⁹ The columnist Huang Zicheng 黃子程 finds these texts of paramount importance for gaining insight to Hong Kong’s *zeitgeist*:

The only way to reflect Hong Kong people’s thinking is, forgive me for saying it, in the special columns. When you read columns from different periods you learn about the different periods in Hong Kong’s society, Hong Kong’s voices and feelings such as happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy. You will have the entire picture lying behind these characters ... And you can see the real face of Hong Kong’s society.²⁰⁰

Most editors and writers had a close bond, although Chen Bingliang 陳炳良 has rather a capitalistic view of this matter when he describes the relationship

¹⁹⁹ A Nong 阿濃, ‘Xianggang sanwen qi tedian 香港散文七特點 (Seven Characteristics of Hong Kong Essays)’, *Ming bao* 明報 (*Ming Pao*), 13 April 1988. Quoted from Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, ‘Guanyu zhuanlan wenhua de lunzheng: “Xianggang dangdai wenxue piping shi” zhi yijie 關於專欄文化的論爭——「香港當代文學批評史」之一節 (On the Debate of the Special Column Culture: A Section of “The History of Contemporary Hong Kong Literary Criticism”)', *Xianggang zuojiabao* 香港作家報 (*Hong Kong Writers*) 12, no. 2 (1996).

²⁰⁰ Zhang Wenzhong 張文中, ‘Zhuanlan: Xianggang weiyi de wenxue: Huang Zicheng de wenxue 專欄：香港唯一的文學——黃子程的文學 (Special Columns: Hong Kong’s Only Literature: Literature by Huang Zicheng)’, 51, 56.

between editor, writer, and reader as comparable to that of a shop owner, a product, and the consumer.²⁰¹ In most cases editor and writer had a personal connection so strong that when an editor changed publishing house the writer would follow him.²⁰² A newspaper editor usually hand-picked his or her writers, and the procedure was pretty straightforward. Once a writer had gained access to the Hong Kong's literary circles through friends and acquaintances, an editor would invite him or her to submit a sample piece of essay. If the editor liked it the writer would be asked to continue writing.²⁰³ The editor could exert his influence and introduce new and unknown writers whose fame would be unimaginable if not for the columns.²⁰⁴ Although writers did not regard being a columnist highly, it was nonetheless a job that made a reasonably steady living with a regular salary (*anwen shouru* 安穩收入).²⁰⁵ This was crucial for southbound literati scraping a living writing for newspapers and periodicals. The southbound writer Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍 finds different styles in the work of the southbound literati which he ascribes to four main influential schools: the Anecdote School (*zhanggu pai* 掌故派), the Western-style School (*xigfeng pai* 西風派), the Local Customs School (*fengtū pai* 風土派), and the Literature and Art School (*wenyi pai* 文藝派).²⁰⁶ Beyond these style trends, Hong Kong martial arts novels in particular captivate

²⁰¹ Chen Bingliang 陳炳良, 'Bianzhe, zuozhe, duzhe: tantan Xianggang de zhuanlan xiezuo 編者、作者、讀者——談談香港的專欄寫作 (Editor, Writer, Reader: A Chat about Hong Kong's Special Column Writings)', 4.

²⁰² Feng Weicai 馮偉才, 'Xianggang de zhuanlan wenhua 香港的專欄文化 (Hong Kong's Column Culture)', 98.

²⁰³ Feng Weicai 馮偉才, 103; Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 'Xianggang baozhi fukan zhuanlan de bianqian 香港報紙副刊專欄的變遷 (Changes of the Columns in Hong Kong's Newspaper Supplements)', 53; Zhang Junmo 張君默, 'Fukan zhuanlan: wo de meng 副刊專欄——我的夢 (Special Columns in Supplements: My Dream)', 22.

²⁰⁴ Chen Bingliang 陳炳良, 'Bianzhe, zuozhe, duzhe: tantan Xianggang de zhuanlan xiezuo 編者、作者、讀者——談談香港的專欄寫作 (Editor, Writer, Reader: A Chat about Hong Kong's Special Column Writings)', 4; Wang Pu 王璞, 'Xianggang de zhuanlan 香港的專欄 (Hong Kong Special Columns)', *Dagong bao: Wenxue* 大公報: 文學 (*Ta Kung Pao: Literature*), no. 407 (2000): B5.

²⁰⁵ Zhang Junmo 張君默, 'Fukan zhuanlan: wo de meng 副刊專欄——我的夢 (Special Columns in Supplements: My Dream)', 15.

²⁰⁶ Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 'Xianggang baozhi fukan zhuanlan de bianqian 香港報紙副刊專欄的變遷 (Changes of the Columns in Hong Kong's Newspaper Supplements)', 41.

a large number of readers: '[m]artial arts novels were very popular in those years in Hong Kong. Every newspaper supplement kept a lot of space for serial martial arts novels, each piece being about two to three thousand characters long. The publishing houses were very eager to turn these rectangular pieces into books'.²⁰⁷

Both publishing formats, the supplement and the column, provided a platform for the southbound literati to write and publish their work, at the same time facilitating the promotion and dissemination of Hong Kong literature.

²⁰⁷ Murong Yujun 慕容羽軍, 41.

Summary

Scholars consider the Chinese intellectuals who moved south to places such as Hong Kong and other Southeast Asian countries at the time of the establishment of the PRC in 1949 a special cultural phenomenon. To understand a crucial part of the cultural and literary field of Hong Kong in the 1950s, this chapter has discussed the historical and social context of the southbound literati and the different conditions under which they took on the task of instructing and educating local Hongkongers, advocating a revival of Chinese culture in Hong Kong. Literature with recurring motifs and themes in different formats served as an important framework and forum for exploring and defining the intellectuals' views on Hong Kong and Mainland China, revealing the structural asymmetry of power between the two.

Different emigration waves in the first half of the twentieth century brought many literati to colonial Hong Kong. They had a number of reasons for choosing Hong Kong, but left their home country mainly due to the particular historical and political circumstances of the time. Many of the writers who left China disagreed with the political ideology on the Mainland, but nonetheless as intellectuals felt a strong sociomoral responsibility for China which they could not ignore. This ambivalent sense of belonging is accurately described in the phrase 'the body is in Hong Kong; the heart belongs to China'. The migrant literati of that time had somewhat a blurry status, as many had not decided whether their stay in the British colony would be temporary or permanent. The scholarship speaks of their double marginalization: by the colonial government and by the Hong Kong locals due to their status as sojourners, refugees migrants, and residents; the literati meantime were, in their minds, located at China's geographical and cultural periphery. They continued to pursue their former careers as writers even in times of economic hardship, expending great effort to promote and disseminate literature in their functions as writers, editors, and publishers. Their literature is intrinsically linked to the publishing field of the 1950s, which introduced new literary formats such as instalment fiction and special newspaper columns.

6 THE BILDUNGSROMAN AND CULTURAL NATIONALISM: WRITING FOR THE HOMELAND

This chapter examines two novels authored by southbound literati in the 1950s to show how their ideals and ideological beliefs manifested as anti-colonial and social critique in their work. It argues that these writers' Hong Kong coming-of-age novels strengthened their sense of Chinese cultural nationalism and reinforced their Chinese identity at 'the margin's margin' in 1950s colonial Hong Kong.

6.1 Chinese nationalism

The concepts of nation (*minzu* 民族) and nationalism (*minzu zhuyi* 民族主義) were introduced and promoted in China by the founder of the Republic of China (ROC), Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (1866–1925), in the country's early Republican era (1912–1927). Sun Yat-sen's conceptual formation of the Chinese nation was propelled by strong feeling against the Manchus, who had headed the Qing imperial dynasty from 1636 to 1912. The nationalist feeling was rooted in culturalism and assumed superiority over Han Chinese culture, based on a distinction between China (*hua* 華) – the civilized state – and the barbarians (*yi* 夷) or uncivilized tribes. This conception of the state was built on the idea of a civilizational identity that empowered the Han to rule non-Chinese, with the possible cultural assimilation of the latter.¹

The nationalist discourse was based on a racial-ethnic formulation of the concept of a Chinese nation drawing on ideas from social Darwinism which defined the Han as the stronger race. Like many Western concepts and ideas, the

¹ See Jacques Gernet and J. R. Foster, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); James Townsend, 'Chinese Nationalism', *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 27 (1992): 97–130, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2950028>.

concept of nation entered China and Chinese thought at the turn of the twentieth century. Following China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894–1895, the European model of the nation-state gradually replaced China's traditional 'All Under Heaven' (*tianxia* 天下) world order.² The concept of 'nation' originated in Europe and corresponds to the German *Völkerschaft* and *Abstammung*, which translate as 'people or tribe' and 'descent' respectively, whereas nationalism connotes a feeling of belonging in one's homeland, which is close to patriotism.³ In the context of China's early Republican era, the concept of 'nation', as Prasenjit Duara mentions, was part of a nation-building process that included adopting a linear historical model.⁴ The Western concept of unilinear time not only underpinned the making of China's national history, as discussed in section 2.6; it was also a crucial and characteristic element of modernity in China and played a key role in its introduction.

6.2 Nationalism and the Bildungsroman

The historical link connecting nationalism, *Bildung*, and the Bildungsroman has been touched on in section 1.1 of this study. A closer look at Chinese philosophy reveals that the notion of *Bildung* is not exclusively linked to the Western context: Confucius provided a spiritual Bildungsroman that is encapsulated in the description of his own stage-by-stage development.⁵

² Marc A. Matten, "China is the China of the Chinese": The Concept of Nation and Its Impact on Political Thinking in Modern China', *Oriens Extremus* 51 (2012): 63. See also Kai-wing Chow, 'Narrating Nation, Race, and National Culture: Imagining the Hanzu Identity in Modern China', in *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, ed. Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poschek Fu (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 47–84; Shiyuan Hao, 'The Late Imperial Qing Dynasty and Its Construction of the Nation-State', in *Chinese Society: Change and Transformation*, ed. Li Peilin, China Policy Series (London: Routledge, 2012), 91–93.

³ For instance Johann Gottlieb Fichte asserts that "Liebe des Einzelnen zu seiner Nation", "Vaterlandsliebe" bedeutet das Bekenntnis zu einem gemeinsamen Ganzen, einer "ewigen Ordnung der Dinge", die über die Individuen hinaus fort dauert und für die diese sich aufopfern'. Ulrich Dierse and Helmut Rath, 'Nation, Nationalismus, Nationalität', in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.24894/HWPh.2666>.

⁴ Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*, History/Asian Studies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁵ See P. J. Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation* (Hackett Publishing, 2000), 9–21.

Eighteenth-century Germany consisted of numerous independent states, and the Bildungsroman genre was built on hopes and aspirations based on national unification. Karl Morgenstern, who coined the term Bildungsroman, had a strong sense of romantic nationalism. Tobias Boes builds on his idea, arguing that 'the Bildungsroman is a genre connected more than any other to the rise of modern nationalism'.⁶ He expands on Morgenstern's discussion of the relationship between the genre and nationalism which he sees as, 'performative' rather than 'normative', in the sense that 'rather than *revealing* it at the end of its plot, the novel of formation *produces* a national form by means of its mimetic capacities as well as its direct rhetorical address to the reader'.⁷ The latter two features are particularly important in analysis of the body of postcolonial novels. Two scholarly works that place socially-marginalized subjects at the centre of the thesis are important in this context. First, the scholar of comparative literature Joseph Slaughter establishes a link between human rights and the Bildungsroman, arguing that a literary text on the development of the human personality, such as the Bildungsroman, can represent a real-life situation that is later enshrined in law.⁸ As such, they are, he concludes, 'mutually enabling fictions that institutionalize and naturalize the terms of incorporation in (and exclusion from) an imagined community of readers and right holders'.⁹ Second, another literary scholar, Pheng Cheah, discusses the Bildungsroman with regard to its 'activist literary *Bildung* of the postcolonial or decolonizing nation'.¹⁰ Cheah draws on Lukács' notion of 'transcendental homelessness', elaborating on how

the bildungsroman is the most appropriate symbolic expression of this search [for a place to live] because its fundamental premise is self that is alienated from the world, a condition of 'transcendental homelessness – the homelessness of an action in the human order of social relations', where meaning is no longer immanent but must be rationally posited by the seeker

⁶ Boes, *Formative Fictions*, 3.

⁷ Boes, 28.

⁸ Slaughter links the book *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe to the origin of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, explaining how the former shaped the drafting of the clause on 'human personality' (article 29). See Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc*, 46f.

⁹ Slaughter, 328.

¹⁰ Cheah, *Spectral Nationality*, 242.

for himself. The bildungsroman provides the symbolic resolution to this homelessness.¹¹

6.3 The Hong Kong Bildungsromans against the backdrop of cultural nationalism

In light of the southbound writers' Bildungsromans about Hong Kong, the above historical context is interesting on at least two accounts. First, the perception of a linear model of time progressing towards an (ultimate) stage or endpoint in the course of development in history lays the groundwork for the teleological stage-to-stage pattern of the genre; and second, the literati's collective concern for the future of the nation and longing for the homeland propelled their production of coming-of-age stories as part of a localized subnarrative of modern nationalism or Chinese nationalism, and anti-colonial criticism. Given the colonial setting the literati do not explicitly mention their ideological viewpoint, although their nationalist sentiment underlies the text, as Elaine Yee Lin Ho asserts: '[i]n 1950s Hong Kong, Chinese nationalism of whatever political persuasion was prohibited from open expression, but both right-wing and left-wing publications and writers could find a space for creative expression if they steered clear of explicit propagandizing'.¹² The Chinese émigré writers from the north experienced the diasporic cultural identity of sojourners and migrants who were part neither of local nor foreign (British) society but fell into the category of 'southbound', moving in their own autonomous circles,¹³ although it can be assumed that they were only loosely organized and did not have a program or an agenda. According to Hon-Chung Chun they were not necessarily motivated by politics, for 'the case

¹¹ Cheah, 242f.; Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Gpic Literature* (London: Merlin Press, 1971), 61.

¹² Elaine Yee Lin Ho, 'China Abroad Nation and Diaspora in a Chinese Frame', in *China Abroad: Travels, Subjects, Spaces*, ed. Elaine Yee Lin Ho and Julia Kuehn (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 17f.

¹³ Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森 [William Tay], Huang Jichi 黃繼持 [Wong Kai Chee], and Lu Weiluan 盧瑋鑾 [Lo Wai Luen], eds., *Guogong neizhan shiqi: Xianggang bendi yu nanlai wenren zuopin xuan (1945–1949) 國共內戰時期：香港本地與南來文人作品選 (1945–1949)* (Selected Works of Local and Southbound Writers during the Chinese Civil War Period (1945–1949)) (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu youxian gongsi 天地圖書有限公司 (Cosmos Book Ltd), 1999), 15–16.

of Chinese intellectuals who settled in Hong Kong after 1949 shows that China-oriented nationalism in Hong Kong in the 1950s was not a purely political phenomenon. They believed in the idea of “saving China with Chinese culture” (*wenhua jiuguo* 文化救國).¹⁴ In reaction to the political nationalism of the CCP-GMD struggle they emphasized the importance of *both* the nation and the state'.¹⁵ Nonetheless, the writers still felt a strong bond to their homeland and were driven by a deep sense of responsibility and mission; for example Lao Sze-kwang 勞思光 (1927-2012), an academic and philosopher, fled from Communist China into exile in Hong Kong and, as Brigitte Knüsel Adamec describes, saw ‘the intellectuals in exile [as] responsible for consolidating the foundation for an alternative culture and future change’.¹⁶ The exiles could not easily break their bond with their native land and instead adopted a double perspective: as Edward Said observes, ‘the exile exists in a median state, neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old ... Because the exile sees things both in terms of what has been left behind and what is actual here and now, there is a double perspective that never sees things in isolation. Every scene or situation in the new country necessarily draws on its counterpart in the old country’.¹⁷

In his collage-style essay ‘Southbound’ (*nanlai* 南來) the writer Cao Juren 曹聚仁, whose novel *The Hotel* is discussed below, notes that he was reluctant to leave Shanghai, although after ‘the liberation’ (the Communists’ victory over the

¹⁴ There had been several such attempts before: for instance the phrase ‘Chinese learning for moral principles (or essence), Western learning for practical application (or utility)’ (*zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong* 中學為體西學為用) and the late-Qing dynasty’s Self-Strengthening Movement (*zhiqiang yundong* 自強運動), also known as the Westernization Movement (*yangwu yundong* 洋務運動) (1861–1895) in nineteenth century, as well as the Great River Society (*dajiang hui* 大江會) of the early twentieth century.

¹⁵ Michael Hon-Chung Chun, ‘The Politics of China-Orientated Nationalism in Colonial Hong Kong 1949–1997: A History’ (doctoral dissertation, The Australian National University, 2010), 98 (italics in origin). For further discussion, see in chapter ‘Promoting Cultural Nationalism: Chinese Intellectuals in Exile in Hong Kong’, in Chun, 88–103.

¹⁶ Brigit Knüsel Adamec, ‘In Exile: Lao Sze-Kwang on Cultural Re-Appropriation’, *Oriens Extremus: Kultur, Geschichte, Reflexion in Ostasien*, no. 52 (2013): 93.

¹⁷ Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, The Reith Lectures (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994), 49, 60.

Nationalists in 1949) he realized that under the CCP every political party member, person and institution would only serve as a little cog in a big wheel. He was reluctant to adapt to such circumstances in order to continue his life and work and decided to leave China for Hong Kong in the spring of 1950, where he enjoyed the colony's liberalism and being able to live as he chose. Mentioning that he was generally not interested in politics and emphasizing his role as spectator, he felt that leaving China to live abroad was irreconcilable with being a literatus: '[a]s far as I am concerned, 'southbound' is a kind of a unsolvable contradiction'.¹⁸ He wrote for several newspapers during his almost twenty-two years in Hong Kong, and as a reporter followed what he called his strategy of 'non-fourism' (*sibu zhuyi* 四不主義), meaning he wanted to offend neither the British nor the American authorities, nor to side with the Communists or the Nationalists.¹⁹ The literary scholar Liu Su 柳蘇 describes Cao Juren as a patriot in his essay 'Cao Juren's Days in Hong Kong'. He remained very concerned about China after leaving it in 1950, and in 1956 he started writing a column with the title 'Northbound' (*beixing* 北行) in the *Nanyang Business Daily* (*Nanyang shangbao* 南洋商報), for which he travelled to the Mainland and conducted interviews with public political figures such as Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong, and others.²⁰ The writer and editor of the journal *Literary Currents* (*Wenyi xinchao* 文藝新潮), Mar Lang 馬朗, recalled an occasion when he had asked Cao Juren to write an article on Boris Savinkov's novel *The Pale Horse* (1909), which at the time was extremely popular in Europe but was banned by the Communists for its anti-Communist content. Cao Juren found writing the review disturbing: it was inconsistent with his intention of staying

¹⁸ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Caifang xinji 採訪新記 (Reports with New Notes)* (Hong Kong: Chuangken chubanshe 創墾出版社 (Chuangken Publishing), 1956), 3–4, 7.

¹⁹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 22f.

²⁰ Liu Su 柳蘇, 'Cao Juren zai Xianggang de rizi 曹聚仁在香港的日子 (Cao Juren's Days in Hong Kong)', in *Xianggang wentan jianying 香港文壇剪影 (The Outline of Hong Kong's Literary Circle)*, Dushu wencong 讀書文叢 (Study Collection) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian 三聯書店 (Joint Publishing), 1993), 6, 15–16. His writings from his travels are published in the books *Small Northbound Talks (Beixing xiaoyu)* 北行小語 (1957), *Second Northbound Talks (Beixing eryu)* 北行二語 (1960), and *Third Northbound Talks (Beixing sanyu)* 北行三語 (1960).

away from politics and troubled him to such an extent that, according to Mar Lang, he almost committed suicide.²¹

Scholarly studies have pointed out Cao Juren's neutral political position throughout his profession as writer and journalist, for which he was criticized by both the left- and right-leaning camps and which made him a controversial figure. Nonetheless, his body of work shows that his link to China remained strong during his twenty-two years in Hong Kong. It appears that while the migrant writers from the Chinese Mainland went south, their thoughts and dedication never left the homeland and continued to drift back northwards, as Elaine Yee Lin Ho observes:

Still it is not to say that the writers had no political or ideological sympathies. If most of them did not become subalterns and agents of the American cultural advance, that was largely due to the nationalistic counter-dynamic which continued to bind them to China. The upheavals of China's modern history which they all had to endure, and the traditional self-arrogated literati responsibility for the fate of society and culture – these were the experimental and affective bonds which identified them much more with left-wing or PRC-sponsored writers than with the American West.²²

In 1933, almost two decades before his move to Hong Kong, Cao Juren wrote the article 'Escape from the Line of Death', which was published in the literary supplement *Random Talk* (*Ziyoutan* 自由談). In it he appeals to Chinese intellectuals' sense of social duty and responsibility, and describes overhearing some intellectuals in China complaining about boredom whenever they got together, and asks provocatively 'is life really that boring?' and 'is this already the end of the world?' Cao Juren finds that the source of the intellectuals' boredom is

²¹ Ma Lang 馬朗 and Du Jiaqi 杜家祁, 'Weishenme shi "xiandaizhuyi"?': Du Jiaqi, Ma Lang duitan 為甚麼是「現代主義」? ——杜家祁, 馬朗對談 (Why "Modernism"?: Conversation between Du Jiaqi and Ma Lang)', 27; Zijiang Song, 'Translation, Cultural Politics, and Poetic Form: A Comparative Study of the Translation of Modernist Poetry in *Les Contemporains* (1932–35) and *Literary Currents* (1956–59)', in *Translation and Academic Journals: The Evolving Landscape of Scholarly Publishing*, ed. Yifeng Sun (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2015), 110; Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 'Xuwuzhuyi: huise ma 虛無主義——灰色馬 (Nihilism: The Pale Horse)', *Wenyi xinchao 文藝新潮 (Literary Current)* 1, no. 1 (18 February 1956): 10–12.

²² Ho, 'Nationalism, Internationalism, the Cold War: Crossing Literary-Cultural Boundaries in 1950s Hong Kong', 89.

their exclusion from society, particularly in the case of those of the younger modern generation. They had escaped from their traditional big families to hide themselves in nuclear families and become independent individuals. In Cao Juren's opinion, man and society belong together and man has a duty to fulfil his social responsibility in the world: '[a] human has to be a man serving society; to have a meaningful life and a valuable existence'. He concludes that what the intellectuals called boredom was in fact emptiness, which can be filled by 'becoming a great person in the service of society'.²³

6.4 Cao Juren: 'Being in this kind of context also helps me understand society'.

Cao Juren 曹聚仁 was born in Zhejiang in 1900. He worked as a teacher in Hangzhou 杭州 for many years before finding his *métier* as a reporter and writer. He migrated to Hong Kong in 1950 and died in Macao in 1972.²⁴ He published a great number of interviews, essays, and reports, of which the majority were written in Hong Kong; it is said that he penned around forty million Chinese characters over the course of his life.²⁵ However, in terms of fiction he only wrote two novels: *The Hotel (Jiudian)* 酒店, and the two-volume book *Old Notes on Qinhuai Feelings (Qinhuai gan jiulu 秦淮感舊錄)* (1971–1972), with the later published just before his death. *The Hotel* was serialized in *Sing Tao Daily* from

²³ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 'Taochu siwangxian 逃出死亡線 (Escape from the Line of Death)', in *Cao Juren zawen ji 曹聚仁雜文集 (Collection of Miscellaneous Works by Cao Juren)* (Beijing: Sanlian shudian 三聯書店 (Joint Publishing), 1994), 79–80; Tsai, "'Ziyoutan" Revisited: The Literature Supplement and Its Writers', 133.

²⁴ Wang Jiancong 王劍叢, *Xianggang zuojia zhuanlüe 香港作家傳略 (Short Biographies of Hong Kong Writers)* (Nanning 南寧: Guangxi renmin chubanshe 廣西人民出版社 (Guangxi People Publishing House), 1989), 190; Song Huaibing 宋懷冰, 'Cao Juren shengping jianjie zhuyao zuopin 曹聚仁生平簡介主要作品 (Cao Juren: Brief Introduction to His Biography, Central Works)', accessed 27 September 2018, http://ch.eywedu.com/Writer/9850_82986.htm.

²⁵ This number was estimated by Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] during a public lecture. *Xianggang wushi niandai de zhishi fenzi 香港五〇年代的知識分子 (Hong Kong Intellectuals in the 1950s)*, Public seminar, Interdisciplinary Seminars (Hong Kong: Centre for Humanities Research; Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Lingnan University, 2005), accessed 16 February 2019, <https://lingnan.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Sessions/List.aspx#folderID=%22a4e468df-afe2-4119-a6c9-75ee7f7e6537%22>.

19 February to 26 July 1952, and later the same year was published as a book.²⁶ Its success led to four reprints in two years.²⁷

6.4.1 Plot synopsis of *The Hotel*

Huang Mingzhong is a 23-year-old, innocent, well-educated Hong Kong from Nanjing girl who has completed secondary school. She flees to Hong Kong with her mother after her father, a bank employee and a nationalist, dies in an aeroplane accident. As a prostitute she soon learns about the harsh realities of Hong Kong's city life. She loses herself in drinking, finding no answer to the cruelty and absurdity of her new life. The story of Huang Mingzhong is a concatenation of fatal setbacks: the death of her father, the illness of her mother, the loss of her home and a large amount of money – such is her fate. The cruelties of life in Hong Kong, where money reigns supreme, turn Mingzhong into the person she becomes in the story. Bitterly, she says that Hong Kong would rather smile at the poor than at a prostitute (*xiao qiong bu xiao chang* 笑窮不笑娼).²⁸

Mingzhong falls in love with the immigrant Teng Zhijie 滕志傑, one of the story's male protagonists. Zhijie, a Sichuan University graduate, is intelligent and attractive, and with his father has fled the chaotic situation on Mainland China for Hong Kong. When the father falls ill, Zhijie needs to provide for them both. A friend of his father finds him a job as a shoeblick at Hotel M, where he meets the famous Huang Mingzhong. Zhijie and Mingzhong begin a brief and intense affair, which is interrupted by the female character Bai Lushan 白璐珊, of whom Zhijie is very fond. He and Bai Lushan fall in love and soon move into a flat together.

²⁶ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 'Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s', 152.

²⁷ Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, 'Chongxun yiben wushi niandai chu de Xianggang xiaoshuo: Cao Juren "jiudian" 重尋一本五十年代的香港小說——曹聚仁「酒店」(Re-Searching a Hong Kong Novel of the Early 1950s: Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', *Xianggang Wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 207 (2002): 58.

²⁸ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*) (Hong Kong: Xiandai shudian 現代書店 (Modern Bookstore), 1952), 39.

Mingzhong cannot accept the fact that her one and only love has chosen another girl, and descends into madness.

A further male protagonist in *The Hotel* is the émigré Chen Tiansheng 陳天聲, who is originally from Huangpi district 黃陂 in the Chinese province of Hubei 湖北. He is a frequent visitor to the dance hall and he worships Mingzhong. Tiansheng has a wife and four children, who he has left behind in Macao while he runs an antique business in Hong Kong. He is a polite and elegant intellectual with a doctoral degree from a university in France, and was previously a director of the education department in Hankou 漢口.²⁹ Critics argue that parallels can be drawn between the views of Tiansheng and those of the author.³⁰

6.4.2 Analysis

The novel consists of ten chapters and is written from the third-person perspective. The author's language is clear and articulate, and some chapters include references to Western literary work, showing that Cao was well-versed in modern Western literature.³¹

The story is about a young Chinese girl who becomes a hostess in Hong Kong for the reasons of survival. Soon after arriving in the colonial city the mother falls seriously ill and they find themselves in financial trouble as a result. To cover the high cost of medication and food to support her mother's recovery,

²⁹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 66.

³⁰ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Tongshi tianya luanli ren: chongping Cao Juren de "jiudian" 同是天涯亂離人——重評曹聚仁的「酒店」(We Are Together in This Chaotic Environment: Re-Discussing Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', *Chengshi wenyi 城市文藝 (Hong Kong Literature Bimonthly)* 3, no. 12 (2009): 56–57.

³¹ Several critics have argued that Chen Tiansheng 陳天聲 is Cao Juren's alter ego and that he adopts a neutral perspective in the novel. Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, 'Chongxun yiben wushi niandai chu de Xianggang xiaoshuo: Cao Juren "jiudian" 重尋一本五十年代的香港小說——曹聚仁「酒店」(Re-Searching a Hong Kong Novel of the Early 1950s: Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', 59; Deng Yuzhang 鄧與璋, 'Ling yi zhong yuedu Cao Juren "Jiudian" de fangfa 另一種閱讀曹聚仁「酒店」的方法 (Another Way to Read Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', *Wenxue pinglun 文學評論 (Hong Kong Literature Study)*, no. 5 (2009): 168; Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Tongshi tianya luanli ren: chongping Cao Juren de "jiudian" 同是天涯亂離人——重評曹聚仁的「酒店」(We Are Together in This Chaotic Environment: Re-Discussing Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', 56.

Mingzhong becomes a prostitute. Encouraged by a neighbour, Mrs. Zhang (*Zhang Taitai* 張太太),³² and without her mother's knowledge, she 'sells her body to provide for the mother' (*maishen yangmu* 賣身養母).³³ During the course of the story she achieves fame of a kind, as a hostess in a dance hall.

Her first night, with a client called Boss Li (*Li Laoban* 李老板) to whom she loses her virginity, coincides with a fire at the squatter settlement which destroys Mingzhong's home.³⁴ She and her mother find themselves homeless and Hotel M,³⁵ to which the book's title *The Hotel* refers, becomes Mingzhong's new home. The hotel and the dancehall are the main settings of the novel.

This chapter discusses five scenes from the novel chosen to illustrate the migrants' desperate situation and how their lives remain connected to China in one way or the other. It argues that their hopes, ideals and ideological beliefs are intertwined with their current situation and they are what keep them going in their unbearable lives; however they can also be regarded as obstacles hindering their accommodation to an alien society.

The following two passages are from Chapter 7, 'The Pale Horse' (*huise ma* 灰色馬), whose title is taken from the novel by Boris Savinkov mentioned earlier, which Cao Juren had been reluctant to review. The scene with Teng Zhijie reflecting on his past and present life takes place two chapters prior to the climax of the story, Chapter 9, in which the secondary character and Mingzhong's

³² Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*), 37.

³³ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 39.

³⁴ In her article Huang Yanping connects this incident with a major fire in the Shek Kip Mei area which broke out in December 1953 and forced the British government to launch a public housing program. See Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, 'Chongxun yiben wushi niandai chu de Xianggang xiaoshuo: Cao Juren "jiudian" 重尋一本五十年代的香港小說——曹聚仁「酒店」(Re-Searching a Hong Kong Novel of the Early 1950s: Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', 59.

³⁵ According to Deng Yuzhang 鄧與璋, Liu Yichang, a Hong Kong writer who knew Cao well, told him that Cao often went to the Midun Hotel (*Midun jiudian* 彌敦酒店 or *Nathan Hotel*) which at the time had a dance hall upstairs. Hotel M might refer to this hotel. See Deng Yuzhang 鄧與璋, 'Ling yi zhong yuedu Cao Juren 'jiudian' de fangfa 另一種閱讀曹聚仁「酒店」的方法 (Another Way to Read Cao Juren's 'The Hotel')', 168–70; Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, 'Yuwang de huasheng – Cao Juren "jiudian" zhong de jiaojihua xingxiang fenxi 慾望的化身——曹聚仁「酒店」中的交際花形象分析 (Lusting for Embodiment: An Analysis of the Image of the Social Butterfly in Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', *Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇 (*Hong Kong Literary Circles*), no. 19 (2003): 17.

antagonist, Bai Lushan, is violently attacked by an unknown person and her face is seriously damaged. It is assumed that the attacker was Mingzhong until it becomes clear that it was a friend of Bai Lushan's late husband. By the end of Chapter 9 Mingzhong has seduced Chen Tiansheng 陳天聲; both are drunk and in a delirious state caused by alcohol and sex, and Mingzhong hits Tiansheng's forehead with a brandy bottle and licks a mix of brandy and the blood pouring from his face from the floor – the first sign of her arising madness.

Chapter 7 begins with Teng Zhijie returning to Mingzhong, despite having chosen to move in with Bai Lushan, a gentle, down-to-earth woman. Zhijie cannot resist Mingzhong and they make love. The following scene illustrates how the omniscient narrator describes, for the first time in the story, the migrants' desperate situation and their bond with their homeland:

At this time Tiansheng, Lindi, Zhijie, Mingzhong, and Lushan have each shouldered their own cross. That is to say the times are very bizarre, and the circumstances are always so embarrassing. These 'Shanghai people' who have drifted overseas are a family related by blood. And when the big catastrophe happened every one of them fled: some are in Mainland China, some in Taiwan; All Under Heaven is been divided into three and one third of the country has arrived in Hong Kong. The ideological battle set off a wave in each family, leaving not a single soul in peace. Their illusions are shattered. They cannot tell if any goal is worth striving for, or if there is anything beautiful to look forward to. Thoughts like 'enjoy life as it comes' and 'be satisfied to get through' root themselves in the dark ground of depression. But pleasures and seeking excitement are temporary delights; all pleasurable things prompt more worries. The kaleidoscope of life projects a magnificent rainbow against the background of an azure blue sea and sky!³⁶

The order of All Under Heaven has been disrupted by the political shift in 1949, dividing and scattering family members to different places. Their different political ideologies drove a wedge between the members of China's 'family', making each more desolate and restless. The migrants, regardless where they live or stay, are still concerned about their home country; in the circumstances it seems impossible to change their lives and they are left with no prospect and

³⁶ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian 酒店 (The Hotel)*, 150.

future. All they can do is to live from day to day and try not to worry about tomorrow. Their sense of responsibility gives them no peace and any pleasure is only temporary, pulling them deeper into the abyss of despair and depression.

The male protagonist, Tiansheng, describes his personal predicament in the present situation, which makes him feel useless because he can find no way of fulfilling his societal duties and responsibilities. The chapter's first passage is about the individual's responsibility in society, a subject about which Cao Juren was particularly concerned and which he had already addressed in essays and other writing.³⁷ The protagonist Tiansheng realizes and understands the desperate situation in which he and the dance girls find themselves, and his inability to find a solution to such injustice fills him with bitter anger:

It comes to him that he has a responsibility towards society. Just because this society has abandoned him does not mean he is willing to abandon society. He does not want to be lazy and make money without doing anything. He is willing to make the effort for gain and believes that he can be a very good cog [in the machine]. But his ties with the old society have just been cut off like that, and every rope in life on which survival depends is broken in pieces. As a person with the right to exist and exposed to such great danger, what duties should he still have towards society? What can society still ask of him?³⁸

He admits to himself that even though the life he spent in Hong Kong is somewhat absurd, are the misfortunes of Mingzhong's whole family and Lindi's trampled experience not worthy of sympathy? God's children are all innocent, [even though] society has abandoned them. When all the strings

³⁷ The critics Huang Yanping and Deng Yuzhang see a connection between Cao Juren and the protagonist Chen Tiansheng, who serves as Cao's alter ego. Huang argues that Tiansheng is Cao Juren's shadow in the novel due to their similar educational backgrounds and life experiences, whereas Deng Yuzhang discusses the character in terms of Cao's 'id-fantasy' (*benwo huanxiang* 本我幻想). See Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, "Chongxun yiben wushi niandai chu de Xianggang xiaoshuo : Cao Juren 'jiudian' 重尋一本五十年代初的香港小說——曹聚仁「酒店」(Re-Searching a Hong Kong Novel of the Early 1950s: Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)," 58f.; Deng Yuzhang 鄧與璋, "Ling yi zhong yuedu Cao Juren 'jiudian' de fangfa 另一種閱讀曹聚仁「酒店」的方法 (Another Way to Read Cao Juren's 'The Hotel')," 168–70.

³⁸ The author mentions a similar point: that each part of the individual's life has become a cog in China's political system, and an intellectual needs a liberal atmosphere for his works. He left China because he did not want to become a cog in that particular machine. See Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Caifang xinji* 採訪新記 (*Reports with New Notes*), 4.

of hope are cut and all that is left is absurdity and headlessness, how can one live on?

His heart is filled with anger, and while facing the meagre cat that has been shaken by society, he feels the indifference of mankind and the cruelty of the political struggle all the more keenly.

'Damn it! If they continue to fight we common people cannot live any more!' He bangs on the table; the cups, plates, pots, and bottles on the table bounce and make a clinking noise.³⁹

Tiansheng realizes that he is torn between wanting to be loyal and dutiful on the one hand and to give up on the other, since it is society that has abandoned him in the first place. He blames society, the paradoxical situation, and the fierce political struggle for the predicament in which he finds himself and sees no way out. He regards the lives of the other migrants as absurd and somehow hopeless: these are lives of human beings who have done nothing wrong, and yet they are doomed. He asks himself what there is left to live and to strive for.

The following passages are from Chapter 10, 'Steep Hillside' (*Jun ban* 峻坂), which marks the turning point and the climax of the novel in which the main character, Mingzhong, descends into madness, prompting her mother, Tiansheng, and Mrs. Huang to reflect on their past lives and ask themselves whether they have chosen the right or the wrong path. Below, Mrs. Huang tries to explain her daughter's misfortunes in the colonial city:

[Mingzhong] reclines on the bench, her head resting on its back. Mrs. Huang props her up, looking at her carefully, and feels a deep sadness within. Her flesh and blood, dead or scattered, are all supposed [to have a home] somewhere. Such an unfortunate girl, and now she was even insane! To put it bluntly we should not blame anyone else [for her bad fortune], and this is only of the grace granted by 'war' and the sins caused by political struggle. Men and women of this generation have lost their lives at the hands of political charlatans! 'Heavens!' She looks up and wails.

Sighing, she thinks of the Huang ancestors, who were all hardworking farmers who did no evil. Zhenhua, Mingzhong's father, had risen from an careful apprentice who trembled with fear to the position of a petty bank clerk, and had never made profit for his own interests, so in terms of fated

³⁹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*), 154.

retribution the family should not be suffering such painful consequences. She remembers very clearly that since childhood Mingzhong has followed the rules; even though she was an only child she had never spoiled her. She has been at the girl's side for twenty years watching her grow up. She has never answered back and has never gone a step too far. She [the mother] must say, she knows her place very well. It is life that has forced her to take the wrong path, and with one step in the wrong direction every following step turns out wrong. Is it actually the child's fault? Or the fault of the era? Or of society? She cannot tell. She has only one thought: that society will always be unreasonable as long as it repress people and does not allow them to live. And speaking of fated retribution, those political and war dealers who reek of blood – how can God not attack them at all?⁴⁰

Mrs. Huang asks herself whose fault it is and who can be blamed for Mingzhong's path and madness. She cannot find any wrongdoing in the Huang family, who have all been honest and hard-working through and through, and therefore should she not fear retribution. 'But what else has changed Mingzhong?' Mrs. Huang asks herself, and cannot think of any misbehaviour or wrong step of Mingzhong's before coming to Hong Kong. She finds no answers, but she knows that the political struggle and the political dealers are part of what is making their lives insufferable.

Shortly after this scene Tiansheng comes to the conclusion that the world, and he himself, are made up of contradictions, and there is no final goal in life. Here Cao Juren, as mentioned, points out the fundamental contradiction of being a southbound migrant: "southbound" is an unresolvable contradiction'. In the novel Tiansheng finally comes to the same realization. He projects the contradiction onto the women in his life and goes through their different characteristics, but none of them seem to be the 'right woman' for him in the sense of being able to fulfil his expectations:

Tiansheng himself consists of contradictions. He sees with his own eyes that the human world is just a composition of contradictions. He leans against his pillow and thinks in silence that there is no rational logic or ultimate goal to the universe, which is made up of contradictions. He admits that his wife's path is a good one, despite the fact that the society that has nurtured her thoughts is already ignored by the times. Mingzhong's lightning alike

⁴⁰ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 205f.

life causes him more or less of a headache, but whenever he sticks by her side he feels the richness of life.

Lindi could also be a suitable wife and a very good housewife, but this society leaves such a woman no way out and the weak ones are tossed away in the storm. While he does not have the courage to resist society himself, he is willing to have a woman courageous enough to revolt against the power of tradition.⁴¹

The last and final part of the novel, 'Epilogue' (*wei sheng* 尾聲), depicts Tiansheng's failed suicide attempt, shortly after which he gathers his courage and reunites with his wife. This marks a second turning-point in the story which can be interpreted as a chance for Tiansheng to start all over again:

Tiansheng still goes back to Lindi's place. At the same time Zhijie rushes to Macao, from where he fetches crazy Mingzhong and old Mrs. Huang together to Hong Kong, using Zhang Ziyuan's cash. The startled birds are especially pleased to see Tiansheng safe and sound. Mrs. Chen, sobbing, says through her tears: 'Tiansheng, we must keep on living even in more-bitter days! We would have not come to Hong Kong only to die as if we were so short-sighted!'

'You can give Lindi's child to me', says Mrs. Huang. 'Tiansheng, I think Mingzhong will recover and come to a clear mind. We have to look on the bright side! I see that Mrs. Chen is strong; she has never uttered a word of complaint!'

'What are we afraid of? We still have our four hands!' Lushan smiles and patted Zhijie's shoulder.

At this moment the weather forecast warns of a level-10 typhoon approaching Hong Kong, and it cautions departing and arriving vessels to be careful. Tiansheng stands in front of the window, staring into the distant sky.⁴²

The migrants know life's hardships very well, but in the end they choose life over death. Even the main protagonist, Mingzhong, finds the will and the strength to persevere; there is still hope and the possibility of recovering from her madness, whereas death brooks no return. All together they unite their forces (and their

⁴¹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 208.

⁴² Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 234.

hands) to take care of Lindi's child since Lindi has been in a shipping accident and has been missing ever since.

After the big typhoon comes calm, and Tiansheng may already be looking forward to what lies ahead of him as he stares into the sky

These paragraphs describe Mingzhong growing up from a pure and innocent young girl to a dangerous fallen woman. The loss of her innocence leads her to reflect on her life and her role in society. She adapts and submits to the norms and principles she has been taught, fulfilling her filial duty to her mother by becoming a prostitute and taking care of her mother and by her perseverance that implies the probability she will recover from her madness rather than surrender to it.

The novel shows Tiansheng as a conflicted character who sees the contradictions inherent in being a migrant when he arrives in Hong Kong. He wants to serve his motherland loyally and dutifully and struggles with his marginalized status in colonial Hong Kong. Tiansheng develops from a struggling, desperate man to one who has not given up his hope of a brighter future.

6.4.3 Reception of *The Hotel* and the author's approach

Chinese-speaking scholars have discussed *The Hotel* in terms of its accurate depiction of Hong Kong's society and people's post-war lives. The description of the protagonists provides, says Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, 'a profundity and a wide spectrum of human experiences'. But it also shows the contradictions of the entertainment industry and the depressed and desperate figures involved in it. *The Hotel*, as Cai Yihuai points out, reflects 'the microcosm of that pathological society; [it is] a symbol of lust' as well as of the importance of money and status in a materialistic society.⁴³ In this way the novel not only calls attention to a social issue but also harshly criticizes the materialistic values of money-oriented society. As Ji Hongfang asserts, '[the author] goes on to heavily criticize the

⁴³ Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, 'Yuwang de huasheng – Cao Juren "jiudian" zhong de jiaojihua xingxiang fenxi 慾望的化身——曹聚仁「酒店」中的交際花形象分析 (Lusting for Embodiment: An Analysis of the Image of the Social Butterfly in Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', 18.

capitalist society that eats away at humanity'.⁴⁴ Literary critics such as Huang Yanping 黃燕萍 also mention the novel's tendency towards the style of popular literature (*yasu wenxue* 雅俗文學), particularly in the parts describing Mingzhong's alluring appearance and the loss of her virginity, probably due to the emergence of the commercialization of literary work at that time.⁴⁵ From a literary-historical point of view *The Hotel* is seen as an important stage of refugee literature: it furnishes the reader with a depiction of 'the misfortune and the extravagant life of the refugees by showing an accurate picture of the society of that time'.⁴⁶

Migrants in Hong Kong found themselves in a new social context which re-evaluated and challenged their traditional values and principles, as addressed in the paper 'Exploring the Ability to Write Down the Gnawing Worries of the Southbound Literati in Cao Juren's *The Hotel*' by Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, who discusses the redemptive function of traditional ethics as an alternative way out of an insane and chaotic world for men as for women. Huang mentions that in *The Hotel* Chen Tiansheng's comparison of Mingzhong, his wife, and Bai Lushan can be read as a metaphor for Cao Juren's own position if one replaces the wives' virtues with the traditional and the avant-garde. Much is said about the traditional Chinese notion of a woman in the illustration of Mingzhong and her choices. According to Huang, Mingzhong subverts the conservative concept of a

⁴⁴ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Tongshi tianya luanli ren: chongping Cao Juren de "jiudian" 同是天涯亂離人——重評曹聚仁的「酒店」(We Are Together in This Chaotic Environment: Re-Discussing Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', 59.

⁴⁵ Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, 'Cong Cao Juren "jiudian" tanxi nanlaren bixia de yaoniexing de fannaoyuan 從曹聚仁「酒店」探析南來人筆下咬嚙性的煩惱 (Exploring the Ability to Write Down the Gnawing Worries of the Southbound Literati in Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', *Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇 (*Hong Kong Literary Circles*), no. 5 (2003): 75. Huang Yanping mentions that the novel has features of 'thirty-cent fiction' (*sanhaozi xiaoshuo* 三毫子小說), i.e. pulp fiction. The words (*san haozi* 三毫子) refer to the Cantonese words *san jiaoqian* 三角錢 and they mean three cents. The Cantonese term refers to the smallest unit of Hong Kong/Chinese currency. Similar words are used in English ('the dime novel') and German (*Groschenhefte*) to describe the genre, which in Hong Kong includes martial arts, sentimental, adventure, and pornographic novels.

⁴⁶ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], *Xianggang wenxue shumu* 香港文學書目 (*A Bibliography of Hong Kong Literature*), 1st ed. (Hong Kong: Qingwen shuwu 青文書屋 (Youth Literary Press), 1996), 21.

patriarchal society in which the woman primarily serves her man and is either single, married or widowed. But this is not all; in Huang's opinion the novel also shows that the younger generation could have been saved from their spiritual predicament if they had only followed the moral values of the older generation. Huang concludes that the characters in the novel who want to subvert and destroy the Confucian rules of etiquette intended to return to traditional ethics in the end.⁴⁷

Cao Juren's main purpose for the novel was to capture an accurate picture of Hong Kong society, as he explains in the introductory note of *The Hotel*, which begins with a quote from Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus spoke Zarathustra*: '[w]hen I came to men, then found I them resting on an old infatuation: all of them thought they had long known what was good and bad for men'. Cao Juren chose a dance hall, where prostitution was the norm, for the novel's setting. To observe this kind of setting and get material for the novel, he says that he visited a dance hall and sat there beside the 'GT dance floor' for eighteen days.⁴⁸ He spoke with several of the girls who worked there and learned of their tragic and desperate situations. He studied them to capture an adequate image; knowing that the reader could only get a hint of 'the music, colours, fragrances, movements and laughter between men and women, which all combined [in this] semi-drunken realm' of dance hall, and that it would not be possible to capture the lively and electric atmosphere in a book. Dance halls and the life of the dance girl was an intriguing theme at the time. Many migrants who had fled the Mainland lived in poverty in Hong Kong,⁴⁹ starting again from scratch, and many young girls became dance girls to support their families. According to Cao Juren there were three to four

⁴⁷ Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, 'Cong Cao Juren "jiudian" tanxi nanlaren bixia de yaoniexing de fannaoyuan 從曹聚仁「酒店」探析南來人筆下咬嚙性的煩惱 (Exploring the Ability to Write Down the Gnawing Worries of the Southbound Literati in Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', 72.

⁴⁸ See Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, 'Yuwang de huasheng – Cao Juren "jiudian" zhong de jiaojihua xingxiang fenxi 慾望的化身——曹聚仁「酒店」中的交際花形象分析 (Lusting for Embodiment: An Analysis of the Image of the Social Butterfly in Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', 17.

⁴⁹ Huang Yanping observes that the huge number of dance girls was a prominent phenomenon at the time. Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, 'Chongxun yiben wushi niandai chu de Xianggang xiaoshuo: Cao Juren "jiudian" 重尋一本五十年代的香港小說——曹聚仁「酒店」 (Re-Searching a Hong Kong Novel of the Early 1950s: Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', 61.

thousand such girls in Hong Kong at the time.⁵⁰ Partly in his role as a researcher and partly out of sheer curiosity he visited the dance halls to gather facts and true-life stories, shedding light on an entertainment business that touched on a central social issue, as he writes in the introductory notes to the novel:

Our society is originally a society in which everything is a commodity. In the dance halls which derived from the demand for the ‘erotic’ the dance girls are actually also a kind of commodity. Since the collapse of the old regime on the Mainland, volatile capital has flowed like river into the sea and brought a lopsided prosperity to Hong Kong. In the meantime, there are many sources of pleasure and the ‘dance’ industry is one among these exceptional sectors.

He concludes this paragraph with the exclamation: ‘Yet being in this kind of context also helps me understand society and find a solution to its problems!’⁵¹

6.5 Huang Guliu’s *The Story of Shrimp Ball*: ‘People won’t starve to death easily’.

The current version of *The Story of Shrimp Ball* (*Xiaqiu zhuan* 蝦球傳) can only partly be considered a 1950s novel, although the time of its genesis, a couple of years before the founding of the PRC, offers an intriguing historical context. *The Story of Shrimp Ball* can therefore be located in the framework of transition from an old to a new society, as the author himself describes it. Written in the late 1940s, its impact lasted until the early 1950s and it was very popular and well-received by both readers and critics.⁵² According to Yang Yufeng 楊玉峰 the novel

⁵⁰ See Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*), n.p. Notes (qianji) 前記; Huang Yanping 黃燕萍, ‘Chongxun yiben wushi niandai chu de Xianggang xiaoshuo: Cao Juren “jiudian” 重尋一本五十年代初的香港小說——曹聚仁「酒店」 (Re-Searching a Hong Kong Novel of the Early 1950s: Cao Juren’s *The Hotel*)’, 58.

⁵¹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*), n.p. Notes (qianji) 前記.

⁵² Huang Jundong 黃俊東, ‘Huang Guliu: Xiaqiu zhuan 黃谷柳: 「蝦球傳」 (Huang Guliu: *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)’, *Dushuren* 讀書人 (*Reader*), no. 11 (January 1996): 42; Ai Xiaoming 艾曉明, ‘Xianggang de langhan xiaoshuo 香港的浪漢小說 (Hong Kong’s Picaresque Novel)’, in *Cong benwen dao bi’an* 從文本到彼岸 (*From the Text to the Other Shore*) (Guangzhou 廣州: Guangzhou chubanshe 廣州出版社 (Guangzhou Publishing House), 1998), 45.

generated a lot of discussion during its circulation as daily instalments, attracting twenty-five reviews between March 1948 and June 1949.⁵³ Interestingly, Huang Guliu notes in an epigraph to the first volume, *Spring Wind and Autumn Rain*, that he was mindful of readers' and others' opinions and suggestions that he had received, and revised the manuscript to include these when he saw fit.⁵⁴

Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, whose original name was Huang Xianxiang 黃顯襄, was born in 1908 in Haiphong, Vietnam, and grew up in Hekou County 河口 in Yunan Province 雲南 in China. He moved to Hong Kong in 1927 when he was 19 to study journalism. After graduating he worked for the newspaper *Universal Circulating Herald* (*Xunhuan ribao* 循環日報) as a proof-reader, submitting manuscripts for publication in newspaper supplements at the same time. In 1937, with the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, Huang joined the Nationalist army. Shortly after the war in 1946, he and his family settled in Hong Kong where he pursued a career as a writer and journalist. During the late 1940s he decided to distance himself from the Nationalist Party (KMT) due the corruption he had witnessed, and eventually joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1949. In the early 1950s he worked as a journalist for the newspaper *Nanfang Daily* (*Nanfang*

⁵³ Yang has compiled a table in which the reviews are listed. Among them five are by Huang Guliu himself. The majority of the reviews are positive and praise Huang's choice of the subject matter and the novel's narrative structure. See the chapter on Yang Yufeng 楊玉峰, "xiaqiu zhuan" de chuban, liuchuan ji huixiang 「蝦球傳」的出版、流傳及回響 (*The Story of Shrimp Ball: Publication, Circulation, and Feedback*), in *Huang Guliu de dianbo rensheng yu chuanguo* 黃谷柳的顛簸人生與創作 (*Huang Guliu's Bumpy Life and His Writings*), 中華文史專刊 *Zhonghua wenshi zhuan* (Chinese Literary History Edition) 18 (Hong Kong: 中華書局(香港)有限公司 *Zhonghua shuju* (Xianggang) youxian gongsi (Chung Hwa Book Company (Hong Kong) Limited), 2015), 72–73.

⁵⁴ Liu Denghan 劉登翰, *Xianggang wenxue shi* 香港文學史 (*A History of Hong Kong Literature*), 158; Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, 'Zhanhou Xianggang wenxue de zhongyao shouhuo: chongping Huang Guliu de "xiaqiu zhuan" 戰後香港文學的重要收穫——重評黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (An Important Harvest of Hong Kong's Post-War Literature: A Re-Evaluation of Huang Guliu's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', *Chengshi wenyi* 城市文藝 (*Hong Kong Literature Bimonthly*) 3, no. 2 (15 March 2008): 80. Yang argues that involving readers and critics' opinions during the writing process has both advantages and disadvantages. *The Story of Shrimp Ball* sparked minor debate about the plot development among critics following its publication. Yang Yufeng 楊玉峰, "xiaqiu zhuan" de chuban, liuchuan ji huixiang 「蝦球傳」的出版、流傳及回響 (*The Story of Shrimp Ball: Publication, Circulation, and Feedback*), 81.

ribao 南方日報), and went to Korea twice to participate in the Korean War. Huang died in 1977 in Guangzhou 廣州 at the age of 68.⁵⁵

The full-length novel *The Story of Shrimp Ball* was published in instalments in *Refeng* 熱風, the supplement of the left-wing newspaper *Huanshang Daily* (*Huanshang bao* 華商報), from October 1947 to December 1948.⁵⁶ *The Story of Shrimp Ball* has a total of 375 pages and 66 chapters, and is in three volumes: *Spring Wind and Autumn Rain* (*Chunfeng qiuyu* 春風秋雨); *Baiyun District in Zhuhai Prefecture* (*Baiyun zhuhai* 白雲珠海); and *A Long and Arduous Journey* (*Shanchang shuiyuan* 山長水遠). The novel is written in simple, clear language, making it accessible to a broad readership.

The first full three-volume edition, revised by the author, was published in Hong Kong by Sinminchu Publishing (*Xinminzhu chubanshe* 香港新民主出版社) in 1948. It was reprinted in Mainland China in 1957 by *Popular Literature and Art Publishing House* (*Tongsu wenyi chubanshe* 通俗文藝出版社) in Beijing.⁵⁷

Huang Guliou had planned a fourth volume, *The Sun and the Moon Strive for Light* (*Riyue zhengguang* 日月爭光) but the book was never realized. As far as the editor-in-chief of the newspaper at that time, Xia Yan 夏衍, could recall, when he asked Huang why he had not finished the final part Huang answered: '[i]t is very strange that I have already lost interest in describing the pain and disability of the old society'.⁵⁸ The editor, a friend of Huang's, remembered asking the author

⁵⁵ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, *Xianggang wenxue zuojia zhuanlüe* 香港文學作家傳略 (*Brief Biographies of Hong Kong Writers*) (Hong Kong: Shizheng ju gonggong tushu guan 市政局公共圖書館 (Urban Council Public Libraries), 1996), 109–10; Huang Guliou 黃谷柳 and Xia Yan 夏衍, 'Yi Guliou: chongyin "xiaqiu zhuan" daixu 憶谷柳——重印「蝦球傳」代序 (Guliou Remembered: An Introduction to the Reprint of *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)'.

⁵⁶ Liu Denghan 劉登翰, *Xianggang wenxue shi* 香港文學史 (*A History of Hong Kong Literature*), 158f.; Hu Decai 胡德才, 'Xiandai Zhongguo de liulanger lixian ji: luelun Huang Guliou de "xiaqiu zhuan" 現代中國的流浪兒歷險記——略論黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (Notes on the Modern Chinese Roaming Child: A Brief Discussion of Huang Guliou's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 (*Hong Kong Literature Study*), no. 4 (15 August 2009): 94.

⁵⁷ Huang Zhongming 黃仲鳴, 'Laizi xiaoshuo "xiaqiu zhuan" 癩子小說「蝦球傳」 (The Rogue Novel *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', *Zuojia* 作家 (*Writer*), no. 8 (1 December 2000): 134.

⁵⁸ Hu Decai 胡德才, 'Xiandai Zhongguo de liulanger lixian ji: luelun Huang Guliou de "xiaqiu zhuan" 現代中國的流浪兒歷險記——略論黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (Notes on the Modern Chinese Roaming

where he had drawn his experiences from as the novel is set at the lowest level of Guangdong society and the author was not even from that region. Huang replied that he had experienced extreme poverty himself working as a coolie and serving in the army, and had come across a lot of poor people, strays, and crooks on the street.⁵⁹ He had drawn from first-hand experience to write novels, which depict different strata of Hong Kong and Guangdong society. Later in life, when he was relatively established as a writer, he receive little in royalties from the newspaper publishing houses.⁶⁰ According to Sun Yingying 孫瑩瑩, given the amount and diversity of his work written and published in Hong Kong, Huang's life in the British colony was the most productive period in his career as a writer because his life there was comparatively stable.⁶¹

6.5.1 Plot synopsis of *The Story of Shrimp Ball*

The first volume, *Spring Wind and Autumn Rain*, takes the reader straight to a pier in Hong Kong: '[n]ear the dockyard in Hong Kong's Hung Hom area, Shrimp Ball is having a hard time escaping from the British police'.⁶² The fifteen-year-old protagonist, Shrimp Ball, decides to leave home after realizing that he is a burden on his mother as they struggle to survive on the little money they earn selling

Child: A Brief Discussion of Huang Guliu's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*', 95; Huang Guliu 黃谷柳 and Xia Yan 夏衍, 'Yi Guliu: chongyin "Xiaqiu zhuan" daixu 憶谷柳——重印「蝦球傳」代序 (Guliu Remembered: An Introduction to the Reprint of *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 3f. In a 1948 book review the author of this article mentions a forthcoming fourth and even fifth volume. See Zhou Gangming 周鋼鳴, 'Ping xiaqiu zhuan diyi er bu 評蝦球傳第一二部 (Review of the First and Second Volume of *The Shrimp Ball*)', *Dazhong wenyi congkan 大眾文藝叢刊 (Popular Literary Magazine)*, no. 4 (1 September 1948): 55.

⁵⁹ Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, *Xiaqiu zhuan 蝦球傳 (The Story of Shrimp Ball)* (Guangzhou 廣州: Guangdong renmin chubanshe 廣東人民出版社 (Guangdong People Publishing House), 1979), 3.

⁶⁰ Zeng Minzhi 曾敏之, 'Shuiyuan shanchang shi juncai: ji Huang Guliu yu "xiaqiu zhuan" 水遠山長失俊才——記黃谷柳與「蝦球傳」 (Lost of a Talent, a Long and Arduous Journey: Remembering Huang Guliu and *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', *Xianggang zuojia 香港作家 (Hong Kong Writers)*, no. 115 (May 1998): 9.

⁶¹ Sun Yingying 孫瑩瑩, "'Xiaqiu zhuan" zhiwai de Huang Guliu: du "Huang Guliu de dianbo rensheng yu chuanguo" 「蝦球傳」之外的黃谷柳——讀《黃谷柳的顛簸人生與創作》 (The Huang Guliu Beyond *The Story of Shrimp Ball*: Reading Huang Guliu's Bumpy Life and His Writing)', *Wenxue pinglun 文學評論 (Hong Kong Literature Study)*, no. 48 (15 February 2017): 13.

⁶² Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, *Xiaqiu zhuan 蝦球傳 (The Story of Shrimp Ball)*, 3.

sandwiches at the Hung Hom (*Hong Kan* 紅磡) dockyard. Fifteen years earlier his father had left the family, sold as a coolie labourer to America (refers probably to the Gold Rush migrants), and has not returned since. After being beaten and scolded by his mother for allowing himself to be cheated of their money through his gullibility, he leaves home and embarks on a journey within and later out of Hong Kong. Shrimp Ball roams through the colonial city but very soon gets caught up in Hong Kong's dark underworld and the criminal activities of the gangsters Doggie Wong (*Wang gouzi* 王狗子) and Crocodile Head (*Eyu tou* 鱷魚頭). He ends up working and smuggling for the latter and meets Brother Ding (*Ding dage* 丁大哥), from whom he learns about the self-defence troop (*ziwei dui* 自衛隊) to which Brother Ding belongs. These troops fought in the Sino-Japanese War and were later deployed by the British government to protect the common people. Eventually Crocodile Head's gang is caught smuggling, and Crocodile Head flees by night, leaving his wife and house staff behind. Shrimp Ball is less fortunate and cannot get away, ends up in Stanley Prison for three months. After his release he makes friends with a boy named Cowboy (*Niu zi* 牛子) and they start to pick pockets for Doggie Wong at the harbour, until one day Shrimp Ball decided to quit when he realizes he has stolen the hard-earned money of his own father, who had returned from the United States. Shrimp Ball's father cannot accept losing all the savings that he has earned 'with blood and sweat'⁶³ over fifteen years, and becomes mentally disoriented. Shrimp Ball feels guilty and depressed about the incident and 'makes up his mind to leave this ghost place' and head for China by climbing Hong Kong's Lion Rock. He says: 'OK, let's go back to the motherland!'⁶⁴

The second and third volumes of the novel are set in Guangdong, which borders Hong Kong's New Territories to the north. Shrimp Ball is convinced that he can start a new life on the Mainland and has a strong desire to find Brother Ding and ask him to recruit him for the self-defence army. He has the idea of being a revolutionary (his words: 'to make revolution'), although he does not grasp the full meaning of the word 'revolution'. On their journey Shrimp Ball and Cowboy

⁶³ Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, 64.

⁶⁴ Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, 65.

are arrested but manage to escape; they find an orphanage, where they intended to stay and have a better life, but are turned away. They continue their trip and finally find Brother Ding, who refuses to let Shrimp Ball join him and the guerrilla troops, convinced that he would not survive their harsh conditions. Shrimp Ball and Cowboy's path crosses that of Crocodile Head again, and they both become involved in Crocodile Head's shady business for the second time. Cowboy is tragically killed, and the volume ends with his funeral.

The third volume, although originally not planned as the final part as four volumes were intended, is about Shrimp Ball's experiences as a guerrilla and his participation in the revolution. He fights against the KMT and is even recruited as a spy to capture Crocodile Head.

6.5.2 Analysis

The following discusses three sections of *The Story of Shrimp Ball*. The first, taken from his revisions to the manuscript prior to its hardcover publication in 1948, shows some striking editorial changes in the first volume which illustrates Huang Guliu's anti-colonial standpoint. The second is the final passage of the first volume, which shows how deeply the protagonist cares about his homeland China as he turns his back on his old and depressing life in Hong Kong to become a revolutionary on the Mainland, as described in the title of the first chapter of the second volume: 'Breaking the old rope and continuing with a new one' (*jiulan duan xinlan xu* 舊纜斷新纜續). The third introduces the three characters Sixth Aunt (*Liu gu* 六姑), Long Dafu 龍大副, and Brother Ding (*Ding dage* 丁大哥), all of whom Shrimp Ball encounters and who serve as his driving forces or role models. They have an encouraging impact on the hero as well as enlightening and guiding him, all of which together contribute to his spiritual and personal growth. Hong Kong serves in this regard as a negative image which helps the protagonist to finally realize that only his homeland can provide the *Bildung* in which he can grow into 'a decent and useful Chinese', which was not available to him in colonial Hong Kong.

The author, as mentioned, revised the story and added sentences to highlight the realities of Hong Kong's colonial society and draw a distinction between its Chinese and its foreigners. Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] compares the original published version with the later revision in his paper 'Two Discourses on Colonialism: Huang Guli and Eileen Chang on Hong Kong of the Forties', remarking that 'what has been added to the later version is an absolute distinction between China and the West, with foreigners simply condemned as stereotypical colonizers'.⁶⁵ It starts with the first sentence of the revised edition: '[n]ear the dockyard in Hong Kong's Hung Hom area, Shrimp Ball has a hard time escaping from of the British police'.⁶⁶ In the original version this reads: '[n]ear the dockyard, Shrimp Ball's morning business faces strong competition'. Further on, '[t]he multicoloured world is in front of him'.⁶⁷ is revised to read '[t]his multicoloured world ruled by foreigners unfolds in front of his eyes and he feels somewhat confused'.⁶⁸ Huang added a further sentence at the beginning of the second chapter to highlight Hong Kong's colonial status, hinting at dark deeds and the corruption of its society: '[t]his colonial society of Hong Kong has many visible and invisible nets everywhere. It so happens that Shrimp Ball walks into one of these and gets unknowingly trapped'.⁶⁹ Apart from those significant alternations, a further line has been added to the 1957 Mainland Chinese version that describes Shrimp Ball's resolution to become a decent and useful Chinese, as in the section quoted below.⁷⁰ Finding Brother Ding again after having met him once becomes Shrimp Ball's only desire during the course of the plot, as he makes up his mind to join the guerrilla forces and become a righteous person serving his country. Interestingly, the protagonist is described as politically naïve and

⁶⁵ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Two Discourses on Colonialism: Huang Guli and Eileen Chang on Hong Kong of the Forties', 86.

⁶⁶ Huang Guli 黃谷柳, *Xiaqiu zhuan 蝦球傳* (The Story of Shrimp Ball), 3.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Two Discourses on Colonialism: Huang Guli and Eileen Chang on Hong Kong of the Forties', 86.

⁶⁸ Huang Guli 黃谷柳, *Xiaqiu zhuan 蝦球傳* (The Story of Shrimp Ball), 4.

⁶⁹ Huang Guli 黃谷柳, 6.

⁷⁰ See Feng Weicai 馮偉才, 'Xianggang de zhuanlan wenhua 香港的專欄文化 (Hong Kong's Column Culture)', 74; Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Two Discourses on Colonialism: Huang Guli and Eileen Chang on Hong Kong of the Forties', 85.

simple-minded: '[h]e does not understand and is completely ignorant of these matters, just like everything else that is happening in the world'.⁷¹ Yet he clearly takes the side of the Communists, fighting against the Nationalist KMT.

The following passage is from the last chapter of the first volume, 'Climbing Over Lion Rock'. While Lion Rock marks the border between Hong Kong and Mainland China, it also separates Shrimp Ball's old life from his new life.

The two of them look lovingly at each other and walk towards Lion Rock. In the past, Cowboy has been to Lo Fu Mountain by himself to learn to use a sword. And now, walking back to his home country, Shrimp Ball is in a similar mood. He likes the rifle that he saw Brother Ding carrying and remembers what he had told him. He dreams of being able to learn to use a gun, to fight in the war and to be a decent and useful Chinese. If he can only find a proper job and not disappoint Sixth Aunt he will be satisfied. He works it out in his head: I have to find Brother Ding and learn how to fight as a guerrilla. He is a good person and he will surely take me on. Cowboy does not ask Shrimp Ball where they are heading; he simply follows the road ahead of him. He has always been like that. He is alone and has nothing to care about. And except for Shrimp Ball, he is now close to nobody. They walk and walk, and they are halfway up the mountain when the sun is in the middle of the sky. And when the sun sets, they have climbed over the mountain Lion Rock.⁷²

⁷¹ Huang Guliou 黃谷柳, *Xiaqiu zhuan 蝦球傳 (The Story of Shrimp Ball)*, 156. Shrimp Ball's simple character has also been discussed by literary scholars. For Cai Yihuai, the protagonist follows a simple concept of life, whereas in Huang Wanhua's opinion his simple mindset makes him unable to fully grasp the complexity of human nature (such as that of Crocodile Head). Hu Decai argues that the hero's growth and change are rooted in his inherent traits of conscience, courage, integrity, and kindness on the one hand and his education and inspiration on the other. See Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, "'Gangdu gu'er" de chuanqi: tan Huang Guliou "xiaqiu zhuan" zhong de xiaqiu xingxiang 「港都孤兒」的傳奇——談黃谷柳「蝦球傳」中的蝦球形象 (The Legend of "The Orphan of Hong Kong": The Image of Shrimp Ball in Huang Guliou's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', *Xiangjiang Wentan 香江文壇 (Hong Kong Literary Circles)*, no. 27 (March 2004): 32; Huang Wanhua 黃萬華, 'Zhanhou Xianggang wenxue de zhongyao shouhuo: chongping Huang Guliou de "xiaqiu zhuan" 戰後香港文學的重要收穫——重評黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (An Important Harvest of Hong Kong's Post-War Literature: A Re-Evaluation of Huang Guliou's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 80; Hu Decai 胡德才, 'Xiandai Zhongguo de liulanger lixian ji: luelun Huang Guliou de "xiaqiu zhuan" 現代中國的流浪兒歷險記——略論黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (Notes on the Modern Chinese Roaming Child: A Brief Discussion of Huang Guliou's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 96.

⁷² Huang Guliou 黃谷柳, *Xiaqiu zhuan 蝦球傳 (The Story of Shrimp Ball)*, 67f.

These are examples of the author's modification of the text to emphasize the distinction between the British colonizers and the colonized Chinese. The modified version is generally in line with the left-wing politics of the time, as observed by Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], who proposes that the author might have 'revised his work in subservience to the new political agenda under the pressure of leftist critics'. In Liang's opinion the sentence 'This colonial society of Hong Kong has many visible and invisible nets everywhere', appears 'to closely follow the discourse on colonialism promoted by the official party in China'. However Liang does not see Huang's revisions of these parts of the novel as effective criticism of colonialism.⁷³ One can only guess at his motives for revising the original version of the novel, keeping in mind that the author shifted his political standpoint to Communist, joining the CCP in the late 1940s.

In *Hong Kong and on the Mainland* Shrimp Ball meets three crucial characters who shape and influence his thinking. The first is Sixth Aunt (*Liu gu* 六姑), who is presumably a prostitute. She is depicted as a simple and honest figure who encourages him never to lose hope; she gives him a piece of advice to take with him: 'Shrimp Ball, don't worry, people don't starve to death easily'.⁷⁴ This phrase stays with Shrimp Ball throughout the novel, and in times of despair he thinks about Sixth Aunt and remembers her encouraging words, as when he and Cowboy climb over Lion Rock to face the new life that lies ahead of them. Literary critics have discussed Sixth Aunt's words of advice as the central idea in the book. Zhou Gangming 周鋼鳴 reads it as a statement of resistance: one should never give up, even in times of desperation.⁷⁵ It becomes a motto for Shrimp Ball and 'a spiritual source [that helps him] to overcome poverty and hunger'.⁷⁶

⁷³ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Two Discourses on Colonialism: Huang Guli and Eileen Chang on Hong Kong of the Forties', 86.

⁷⁴ Huang Guli 黃谷柳, *Xiaqiu zhuan* 蝦球傳 (The Story of Shrimp Ball), 15.

⁷⁵ Zhou Gangming 周鋼鳴, 'Ping xiaqiu zhuan diyi er bu 評蝦球傳第一二部 (Review of the First and Second Volume of the Shrimp Ball)', 55.

⁷⁶ Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, "'Gangdu gu'er" de chuanqi: tan Huang Guli "Xiaqiu Zhuan" zhong de xiaqiu xingxiang 「港都孤兒」的傳奇——談黃谷柳「蝦球傳」中的蝦球形象 (The Legend of "The Orphan of Hong Kong": The Image of Shrimp Ball in Huang Guli's The Story of Shrimp Ball)', 30; Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, 'Tan "xiaqiu zhuan" de yishu tese 談「蝦球傳」的藝術特色 (Talks on

Another character that Shrimp Ball looks up at is the intellectual Long Dafu (*Long dafu* 龍大夫). He is widely read, sings, plays an instrument, and composes music. Shrimp Ball and Cowboy meet him on a boat and are deeply impressed by his skills and his commitment to serve China.⁷⁷ Long Dafu's ideal is to retreat to the countryside and lead a simple life, and 'given the chance he would look for an elementary school in the country and at the same time do some studying. While he teaches he can study for himself. He would ideally have a small organ to practice on and play his new compositions'.⁷⁸ Long Dafu embodies the literatus who has read many books and would rather stay away from the ongoing civil wars and politics: 'Dafu knows everything about the principle of serving the people, but he only thinks of his music and composition studies. He can only think of offering the best of his skills, for example composing and singing for the people and so on'.⁷⁹

The character Brother Ding (*Ding dage* 丁大哥), on the other hand, makes a deeper impression on the protagonist than Long Dafu. He is introduced in the chapter 'The body is in Hong Kong, the heart belongs to the Motherland' (*Shen zai Xianggang, xin zai zuguo* 身在香港, 心在祖國) and is described as an energetic, hands-on young man: 'Brother Ding is a man of about 30. He is young and strong and full of vigour. The deep-set eyes spark in his brown face'.⁸⁰ Shrimp Ball meets him halfway through the first volume and is instantly impressed by him and his activity in the self-defence army. He asks if a person like him could join the troops and Brother Ding answers that basically everyone can participate: '[a]nyone who loves the motherland and is willing to sacrifice everything to serve the people is accepted'.⁸¹ To Shrimp Ball it seems that they are fighting for a good cause, and joining this troop becomes a strong motivation for leaving Hong Kong and

the Artistic Features of The Story of Shrimp Ball)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 13 (5 January 1986): 53.

⁷⁷ Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, *Xiaqiu zhuan* 蝦球傳 (The Story of Shrimp Ball), 190.

⁷⁸ Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, 230.

⁷⁹ Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, 230.

⁸⁰ Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, 33.

⁸¹ Huang Guliu 黃谷柳, 34. "Serve the people" is the title of a speech by Mao Zedong from 1944.

embarking on an arduous journey on the Mainland. Asked if he plans to stay in Hong Kong in the long term, Brother Ding replies that there is nothing else he can do. They are there to protect the lives and assets of the Chinese people. His troop is scattered in the north and the KMT reactionaries have been killing people and families at the Dongjiang and Xijiang River. The troop came to their rescue because he could not let them be thrown to the wolves. He closes his monologue with the line: 'But even if our bodies are in Hong Kong, our hearts belong to the motherland'.⁸² Brother Ding embodies the ideal revolutionary fighter who follows the Communist slogan 'Serve the People' and devotes himself wholly and entirely to the public interest.

It is interesting to note that all three figures – a prostitute, a literatus and a guerrilla – each with a different background, contribute to Shrimp Ball's growth and pave the way for him to become a decent and useful Chinese. Sixth Aunt provides spiritual encouragement, the intellectual Long Dafu represents the world of art and knowledge, and Brother Ding, on the revolutionary path, introduces Shrimp Ball to the realm of the military, which he devotedly follows.

The Story of Shrimp Ball ends with the defeat of the villain, Crocodile Head. But before this happens Shrimp Ball plays central role in convincing Crocodile Head that there is no escape for him, and at this point Shrimp Ball seems to have gained the advantage over him both strategically and intellectually when he says: 'So, what to do? I will kill you if you don't surrender! Your wife will be dead; you will also be dead, and perhaps I will die too. But the self-defence troops won't die. Do you understand? My semi-automatic is already loaded. If you don't surrender, Sister Yaxi. I, you, we're all done for!'⁸³ At the end all hope is focused on the self-defence troops, who will outlive everyone else in the story.

⁸² Huang Guliu 黄谷柳, 35.

⁸³ Huang Guliu 黄谷柳, 383.

6.5.3 Reception of *The Story of Shrimp Ball* and the author's approach

The three-volume *Story of Shrimp Ball* received considerable attention and enthusiastic reviews, particularly while it circulated in instalments. The critic Zhou Gangming 周鋼鳴 points out in his review of the two first volumes that the novel's topic, a young street boy who encounters various figures from the criminal communities in Hong Kong and Guangdong, and after many twists and turns escapes and finds a new and better life, is unusual, or even novel.⁸⁴ Another critic Hu Decai 胡德才 discusses *The Story of Shrimp Ball* in terms of its successful portrait of a young stray child.⁸⁵ The famous Chinese left-wing novelist Mao Dun 茅盾 drew attention to Huang's novel in a speech at the first meeting of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (*Zhongguo wenxue yishujie lianhe hui* 中國文學藝術界聯合會) in July 1949, saying that 'from the artistic perspective, it breaks the bounds of the traditional form of the May Fourth and strives towards the development of a national form and in the direction of popularization'.⁸⁶ Mao Dun also observes that 'the first and second volumes of *The Story of Shrimp Ball* can perhaps be ranked among the most popular novels in Southern China in 1948'.⁸⁷

The literary scholarship has principally discussed *The Story of Shrimp Ball* in terms of the immense significance of its portrayal of the multi-faceted societies of 1940s Hong Kong and Guangdong by utilizing these places as its settings. It is interesting to note that the discussion of *Shrimp Ball* resemblances that of *The*

⁸⁴ Zhou Gangming 周鋼鳴, 'Ping xiaqiu zhuan diyi er bu 評蝦球傳第一二部 (Review of the First and Second Volume of *The Shrimp Ball*)', 55.

⁸⁵ Hu Decai 胡德才, 'Xiandai Zhongguo de liulanger lixian ji: luelun Huang Guliu de "xiaqiu zhuan" 現代中國的流浪兒歷險記——略論黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (Notes on the Modern Chinese Roaming Child: A Brief Discussion of Huang Guliu's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 93.

⁸⁶ Zeng Minzhi 曾敏之, "'Xiaqiu zhuan" xu 「蝦球傳」序 (Preface: *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', *Dagong bao: Wenxue* 大公報: 文學 (*Ta Kung Pao: Literature*), no. 778 (2 July 2006): C10.

⁸⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, 'Guanyu "xiaqiu zhuan" 關於「蝦球傳」 (On *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', in Mao Dun lun Zhongguo xiandai zuojia zuopin 茅盾論中國現代作家作品 (Mao Dun Talks about Works by Modern Chinese Writers) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 1980); Quoted in: Liu Denghan 劉登翰, *Xianggang wenxue shi* 香港文學史 (A History of Hong Kong Literature), 158.

Hotel in this respect, emphasizing the first-hand experiences on which both writers drew and the adequate and the complex image of society deriving from the two novels. According to the author's daughter, Huang Yanjuan 黃燕娟, her father observed the people and their daily lives in different settings in Hong Kong.⁸⁸ The majority of research papers and articles about *The Story of Shrimp Ball* mention how it reflects the society and the social reality of the time. The literary critics Zhou Gangming 周鋼鳴 and Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞 point out its value as a social novel that presents a broad picture of the different social and political strata, although the former notes that the story is restricted to just one narrative perspective, that of Shrimp Ball, with the other characters less-developed due to the novel's main focus on the setting.⁸⁹ Yan Chunjun, on the other hand, stresses its advantages as a social novel that succeeds in describing the broad range and the chaos of society in both Hong Kong and Mainland China.⁹⁰ The reader, according to Hu Decai 胡德才, learns about the changing environment and society of the late 1940s and how the common people had to adapt to the changes in the transition from old to new, as does Shrimp Ball when he 'bids farewell to his old self and moves forward to a new life'.⁹¹ The scholar Huang Wanhua 黃萬華 draws attention to another interesting character, the gang leader Crocodile Head, who is, he says, not only the villain of the story but also has a complex social character; his actions seeming opaque and unpredictable to Shrimp Ball.⁹² Apart from the

⁸⁸ Yang Yufeng 楊玉峰, "'xiaqiu zhuan' de chuban, liuchuan ji huixiang 「蝦球傳」的出版、流傳及回響 (*The Story of Shrimp Ball: Publication, Circulation, and Feedback*)', 81.

⁸⁹ Zhou Gangming 周鋼鳴, 'Ping xiaqiu zhuan diyi er bu 評蝦球傳第一二部 (Review of the First and Second Volume of *The Shrimp Ball*)', 61; see also Huang Zhongming 黃仲鳴, 'Laizi xiaoshuo "xiaqiu zhuan" 癩子小說「蝦球傳」 (*The Rogue Novel The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 135.

⁹⁰ Yan Chunjun 顏純鈞, 'Tan "xiaqiu zhuan" de yishu tese 談「蝦球傳」的藝術特色 (Talks on the Artistic Features of *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 52; see also Sun Yingying 孫瑩瑩, "'xiaqiu zhuan" zhiwai de Huang Guliu: du "Huang Guliu de dianbo rensheng yu chuanguo" 「蝦球傳」之外的黃谷柳——讀《黃谷柳的顛簸人生與創作》 (*The Huang Guliu Beyond The Story of Shrimp Ball: Reading Huang Guliu's Bumpy Life and His Writing*)', 13.

⁹¹ Hu Decai 胡德才, 'Xiandai Zhongguo de liulanger lixian ji: luelun Huang Guliu de "xiaqiu zhuan" 現代中國的流浪兒歷險記——略論黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (Notes on the Modern Chinese Roaming Child: A Brief Discussion of Huang Guliu's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 95.

⁹² Huang Wanhua 黃方華, 'Zhanhou Xianggang wenxue de zhongyao shouhuo: chongping Huang Guliu de "xiaqiu zhuan" 戰後香港文學的重要收穫——重評黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (An Important

novel's revealing insights into society, literary scholars have pointed out the strong local character in the descriptions of Hong Kong and Guangdong.⁹³ In the case of Hong Kong, for instance, the story begins with the protagonist earning a living at the Hung Hom docks and continues with his roaming through the city, passing through and exploring places such as Tsim Sha Tsui (*Jiansha zui* 尖沙咀), the Peninsula Hotel, the central post office, the railway station's clock tower, Wan Chai (*Wanzai* 灣仔), Kowloon City (*Jiulong cheng* 九龍城), and, at the end of the first volume, the famous Lion Rock. In Huang Wanhua's 黃萬華 opinion weaving these places into the plot shows that the author cared about Hong Kong and its people, and furthermore, in this way creates a sense and a consciousness of locality for those familiar with Hong Kong's urban space and triggers the reader's emotions about the homeland.⁹⁴ The author also mixes vernacular Chinese with Cantonese phrases to make it both a local Hong Kong and a South China novel,⁹⁵

Harvest of Hong Kong's Post-War Literature: A Re-Evaluation of Huang Guliu's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*'), 82.

⁹³ Hu Decai 胡德才, 'Xiandai Zhongguo de liulanger lixian ji: Lüelun Huang Guliu de "xiaqiu zhuan" 現代中國的流浪兒歷險記——略論黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (Notes on the Modern Chinese Roaming Child: A Brief Discussion of Huang Guliu's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 11.

⁹⁴ Huang Wanhua 黃方華, 'Zhanhou Xianggang wenxue de zhongyao shouhuo: chongping Huang Guliu de "xiaqiu zhuan" 戰後香港文學的重要收穫——重評黃谷柳的「蝦球傳」 (An Important Harvest of Hong Kong's Post-War Literature: A Re-Evaluation of Huang Guliu's *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 82.

⁹⁵ In this regard, it is often discussed as a successful example of a novel that meets the challenges of 'Dialect Literature'. See Liu Denghan 劉登翰, *Xianggang wenxue shi* 香港文學史 (*A History of Hong Kong Literature*), 148; Huang Zhongming 黃仲鳴, 'Laizi xiaoshuo "xiaqiu zhuan" 癩子小說「蝦球傳」 (The Rogue Novel *The Story of Shrimp Ball*)', 134; Huang Zhongming 黃仲鳴, 'Zhengzhi guashuai: Xianggang fangyan wenxue yundong de faqi he luomu 政治掛帥——香港方言文學運動的發起和落幕 (A Political Order: The Begin and the End of the Dialect Literature Movement in Hong Kong)', *Zuojia* 作家 (*Writer*), no. 11 (August 2001): 113. According to Lorraine Wong, 'in *Shrimp-ball*, Cantonese and Mandarin elements intermix without fusing together', whereby 'Cantonese is used to effectively imitate the everyday speaking habits of ordinary people of a specific region of southern China'. Moreover, 'he [Huang Guliu] allows Mandarin and Cantonese to interact in ways that debunk the dominant position of Mandarin, as well as challenging the perceived isolation of Cantonese'. See Lorraine Wong, 'Threshold Nationhood: Huang Guliu's *The Story of Shrimp-Ball*, Chinese Latinization, and Topolect Literature', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2018): 249, 253.

conveying a sense of the customs, places and language of South China.⁹⁶

6.6 Imagining the home country in times of scarcity

The two Bildungsromans *The Hotel* and *The Story of Shrimp Ball* not only tell the stories of their protagonist's gradual development and spiritual and economic hardships but are also individual life stories that clearly show both authors' concern and sense of responsibility for China and Chinese society. Cao Juren and Huang Guliu left their home country and settled into their new lives in Hong Kong, yet each retains, as Appadurai notes, 'a special ideological link to a putative place of origin but is otherwise a thoroughly diasporic identity'.⁹⁷ They adopt the double perspective, as Elaine Ho observes: 'Often in their ethno-national self-identifications, diasporic communities are responding, in one direction, to the centrifugal politics of a nation of origin and, in another, to the minoritizing strategies of the nation of settlement'.⁹⁸

The coming-of-age stories of these two southbound literati reveal these dualistic characteristics. On the one hand the narratives are very much linked to the authors' home country, and on the other they describe the actual reality (and assert a claim of authenticity) as they found it. In *The Hotel* Cao Juren addresses the complex topic of the migrant communities in Hong Kong and the migrants' struggles to contribute to their country; he also explores the social stratum of the dance girls, whose increasing number was a burning issue at the time in Hong Kong. Huang Guliu's *Shrimp Ball* focuses on a poor and roaming street boy who belongs to a segment of society that the author knew very well from his own experience. The boy has a burning wish to be a revolutionary, or at least to take

⁹⁶ Sun Yingying 孫瑩瑩, "'Xiaqiu zhuan' zhiwai de Huang Guliu: du 'Huang Guliu de dianbo rensheng yu chuanguo'" 「蝦球傳」之外的黃谷柳——讀《黃谷柳的顛簸人生與創作》(The Huang Guliu Beyond *The Story of Shrimp Ball*: Reading Huang Guliu's Bumpy Life and His Writing)', 13f.

⁹⁷ Appadurai applies the term "transnation" to a community that does not belong to a nation geographically, in a sense being delocalized but still linked to the home country, as is the case for the many different ethnic identities living in the United States. See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Public Worlds (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1996), 172.

⁹⁸ Ho, 'China Abroad Nation and Diaspora in a Chinese Frame', 5.

part in the revolution. Hong Kong cannot satisfy this hunger and the colonial city gives him no incentive to stay, and he soon leaves that 'ghost place' to play a crucial role in capturing the villain of the story. In his search for an identity he encounters three secondary characters who shape and form his thinking and actions. Naively, as he is presented to the reader in the beginning, Shrimp Ball gains *Bildung* through a prostitute, a literatus and a guerrilla, learning from them about the different options and paths in life during the course of the novel. As Ai Xiaoming 艾晓明 concludes: 'Yet such work as *The Story of Shrimp Ball* is not only part of the author's concern for humanity; it is also part of his political position. The author presents an alternative way out as an ideal choice in life'.⁹⁹

Summary

The Bildungsromans produced by the southbound literati of the 1950s illustrate the complex socio-cultural situation and ambivalent feelings of the migrant community in Hong Kong. They demonstrate a path of growth that takes the protagonists from their native China to Hong Kong, where they are confronted with a set of values that are different to those of their home country. Only by evaluating and comparing these values can they reach a greater sense of self-awareness that helps them to find their place in society and the world.

The intellectuals felt a strong socio-moral responsibility for Chinese society and, unable to sever their strong emotional and spiritual link to their homeland, adopted a dual perspective on the homeland and on their actual place of residence. Originally from a nation that they saw as superior in many ways and

⁹⁹ Ai Xiaoming 艾晓明, 'Xianggang de langhan xiaoshuo 香港的浪漢小說 (Hong Kong's Picaresque Novel)', 47.

particularly culturally, the literati adopted the role of mediators between the national and local/foreign culture and as advocates of Chinese cultural nationalism. The Hong Kong Bildungsromans contain sub-narratives of Chinese nationalism on the one hand and anti-colonial criticism on the other. *The Hotel* illustrates the author's reflections on the political upheavals and the social situation and their consequences for the migrants at the time. As a coming-of-age novel it not only shows the spiritual and personal *Bildung* of the heroine, Huang Mingzhong, whose insanity can be read as a perseverance; implying the likelihood she may recover from madness rather than to surrender. The novel also conveys an accurate picture of the migrant intellectuals' social and economic situation and the heavy burden of responsibility that they carried. *The Story of Shrimp Ball* expresses strong criticism of the colonial British government, in particular in the second, revised edition of the novel, and at the same time shows the potential for a Chinese living outside the cultural centre of China to contribute to the nation whether spiritually, intellectually, or militarily. These two Hong Kong Bildungsromans demonstrate how their Chinese writers were not only remembering the land that had been their home by writing about the past, but also writing for that land in their present.

7 THE BILDUNGSROMAN AND THE REAPPROPRIATION OF TRADITIONAL AND MORAL VALUES

This chapter demonstrates the complex negotiations involved in the coexistence of modern and traditional moral values in the southbound literati's narratives. Their displacement from their native country triggered feelings of loss, loneliness, and homesickness, while life in under colonial British rule reinforced their reappropriation of Chinese cultural values for spiritual sustenance and guidance. This is interesting in light of the intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement's advocacy, a few decades earlier, of total rejection of Confucian tradition and values as part of the Westernization project. Chinese tradition and Confucianism were revitalized and promoted in colonial 1950s Hong Kong by the British government to counter the rise of radical nationalism, as also by Mainland Chinese intellectuals in exile in Hong Kong seeking to 'represent, rejuvenate, promote, and sustain Chinese culture in Hong Kong', for instance by founding the New Asia College (*Xinya shuyuan* 新亞書院) in 1949 while China was experiencing a period of total rejection of Chinese culture.¹ Confucianism was set in a different and broader context, as Elaine Ho observes: 'even as Confucianism in exile seeks to disengage with the two competing Chinese state-sponsored nationalisms, it is realigned with the politics of its Hong Kong diasporic location, the imperatives of colonial rule within Hong Kong itself and the contest for power between the Cold War nations'. And 'in 1950s Hong Kong, Confucianism was Chineseness in exile, forcibly separated from its traditional homeland and enforced to seek an alternative existence in the world as a global

¹ Chou, *Confucianism, Colonialism, and the Cold War*, 2. See also Chun, 'The Politics of China-Orientated Nationalism in Colonial Hong Kong 1949–1997: A History', 89–93.

philosophy'.² In this context four renowned Chinese intellectuals, Tang Junyi 唐君毅, Zhang Junmai 張君勱, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, and Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, drafted and signed a 1956 declaration in Hong Kong entitled 'A Manifesto for a Reappraisal of Sinology and the Reconstruction of Chinese Culture', which later became a reference text for New Confucianism.³

The southbound literati's coming-of-age novels are situated within the framework of the emergence of Confucianism and the reappropriation of core Chinese traditional values. The characters in the novels only find the true meaning of these values after losing them. For this reason the journey into the world and into the foreign is a journey into oneself and the *Bildung* of the self. After losing oneself in the world one returns with a new perspective, having achieved *Bildung*.⁴

The following discussion of three Bildungsromans – *The Hotel*, *Summer at Gulang Island*, and *Yindi: A Barcarolle* – reveal how the traditional concept and role of woman are framed and challenged. They show that loss of these pre-modern mores results in reevaluating and questioning them, through whom the protagonists gain their true understanding of the self and the society. With that experience they would be able to endure obstacles and hardships in life.

² Ho, 'China Abroad Nation and Diaspora in a Chinese Frame', 18, 19; Pheng Cheah, 'Chinese Cosmopolitanism in Two Senses and Postcolonial National Memory', in *Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 125.

³ For more on the 1958 Manifesto and its meaning in the diasporic framework, See Ho, 'China Abroad Nation and Diaspora in a Chinese Frame', 14–17.

⁴ This can also be found in the works of Erich Auerbach, Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Hölderlin. Auerbach points out that true understanding of one's native country can only be gained as an exile in a foreign land. 'Certainly the most precious and indispensable what a philologist certainly inherits are the language and images of his nation; but only through separation and by overcoming those will they become effective.' See Erich Auerbach, *Philologie der Weltliteratur: sechs Versuche über Stil und Wirklichkeitswahrnehmung*, Fischer Taschenbücher (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992), 96.

7.1 Cao Juren's *The Hotel*: 'A person needs a home, a place to settle'.

The following pages discuss four scenes from the *The Hotel* that show the importance of traditional moral values and the protagonist's struggle to hold onto them in Hong Kong's money- and consumption-oriented society. Cao Juren was critical of Hong Kong and pointed out that its dance girls were treated as commodities. The passages below demonstrate the protagonist's conflicting views of modern sexual morals and they show how body and mind are seen as one entity.

During the course of the novel Huang Mingzhong 黃明中 develops from a pure and honest young girl into a seductive and dangerous woman, whose beauty and sexual allure hypnotise every man she meets. This path is characterised by the loss of her childlike innocence, naivety and traditional morals, which paves the way for her recovery from her madness and restore a new sense of self. She is morally ambiguous throughout the story, alternating between pursuing the ideal of home and a family, as expected of her as a woman, and working as a prostitute, enjoying the moment and her freedom from duties or responsibilities. Cai Yihuai's 蔡益懷 portrays Mingzhong as the epitome of a Hong Kong prostitute; she is also a social butterfly (*Yige youxue yourou de jiaojihua xingxiang* 一個有血有肉的交際花形象) and the reason she appears so real, says Cai Yihuai, is Cao Juren's meticulous description of her inner world and her mental breakdown.⁵

The following passages illustrate first the protagonist's first night as a prostitute, which marks the starting point of her development as a femme fatale. Next, having become accustomed to her work Mingzhong realizes how she has changed: it is as if she has two different identities and her soul is also divided into two. In the third passage Mingzhong's mother, Mrs. Huang, notices a change in her daughter and reminds her of what is important in life: a home; a place to settle. Last, Mingzhong finally seems to have understood the notion of home when she

⁵ Cai Yihuai 蔡益懷, 'Yuwang de huasheng – Cao Juren "jiudian" zhong de jiaojihua xingxiang fenxi 慾望的化身——曹聚仁「酒店」中的交際花形象分析 (Lusting for Embodiment: An Analysis of the Image of the Social Butterfly in Cao Juren's *The Hotel*)', 16, 20.

reads the passages on home, love, joy, and happiness in D. H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, whose theme and context intersect with those of the *The Hotel* in showing both heroines' conflict with the moral principles and standards of becoming a modern and emancipated woman.

The dance hall in the hotel is where the interaction between clients and prostitutes take place. It seems that once a girl enters the floor of the dance hall (*jinchang* 進場), she can become a dance girl. The characters in *The Hotel* are clearly all migrants from Mainland China. Most of the male staff and visitors are better educated than the women, but they all lost their assets in moving to Hong Kong and had to start from scratch, regardless of their lives in China. For the women, being a dance girl is not the worst thing in life: 'If you make it as a dance girl nowadays, you have taken a step up' (*Jintian nenggou zuole wunü! Zongsuan pashangle yibule!* 今日能夠做了舞女! 總算爬上了一步了!).⁶

The female protagonist, Huang Mingzhong 黃明中, is described as an innocent and educated girl until she becomes a femme fatale. The secondary character Bai Lushan 白璐珊 serves as Mingzhong's opposite in the novel, embodying all the feminine virtues that Mingzhong lacks. Lushan is described as a hot spring (*wenquan* 溫泉) with whom one can spend a happy and carefree (*shuchang* 舒暢) time, whereas Mingzhong is like a burning fire (*yituan rehuo* 一團熱火) that makes men melt and unable to think (*hunmi de meiyou sixiang* 昏迷得沒有思想). The two women are like day and night: a day in the summertime (*xiari zhiri* 夏日之日) and a day in winter (*dongri zhiri* 冬日之日).⁷ Mingzhong is self-indulgent (*fangzhong* 放縱) and stubborn (*renxing* 任性) and represents the kind of woman a man cannot live with,⁸ unlike Lushan, who is able to provide men with a sense of home.⁹ The writer focuses on traditional values such as the family and home and presents Mingzhong as a woman who has failed in many ways: her bad temper drives men away and she has no intention of becoming a mother.

⁶ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*), 86.

⁷ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 118.

⁸ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 125–26.

⁹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 146.

According to her own mother, 'a woman only becomes a real woman when she is a mother' (*Zuole muqin denüren, caishi zhenzheng denüren* 做了母親的女人，才是真正的女人).¹⁰

Once Mingzhong chooses to become a prostitute her fate is sealed. According to Paola Zamperini, as soon as a prostitute enters a brothel she loses her 'social status and her biological destiny: she is entering a different world of exchange and production'.¹¹ In her book *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* Shannon Bell points out that the modern discourse on prostitution is also part of a broader discursive production of female sexuality 'which separated the female body into the reproductive body and the un(re)productive body: normal female sexuality was defined in terms of woman's reproductive functions; deviant female sexuality was defined in terms of prostitution'.¹² In this way the loss of virginity means also the loss of one's body¹³ because the 'body is what determines the fate of the child-prostitute and the vehicle that leads her to "to lose her body" (*shi shen* 失身), meaning here the loss of her virginity, the ultimate bodily transformation that officially sanctions her social identity as a sex worker and that allows her body to acquire a stable narrative meaning'.¹⁴ And if the female body does not take part in biological reproduction it is considered lost by a society that wants maximal fertility in women.¹⁵ *The Hotel* clearly conveys the message that a woman must fulfil her role as a mother.

The body is meaningful to each female protagonist as 'those stories we tell about the body in the effort to know and to have it, which result in making the

¹⁰ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 223.

¹¹ Paola Zamperini, *Lost Bodies: Prostitution and Masculinity in Chinese Fiction*, Women and Gender in China Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 58.

¹² Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 41.

¹³ "Losing one's body" is a common description of defloration in a brothel in late imperial Chinese vernacular fiction. See Zamperini, *Lost Bodies*, 54.

¹⁴ Zamperini, 18.

¹⁵ Zamperini, 57.

body a site of signification – the place for the inscription of stories – and itself a signifier, a prime agent in narrative plot and meaning'.¹⁶

In many courtesan novels the brothelkeeper introduces the girl to the business of prostitution. In *The Hotel*, Mrs. Zhang (*Zhang taitai* 張太太) persuades Mingzhong to sell her body. On Mingzhong's first night as a prostitute she meets Boss Li (*Li laoban* 李老板), who keeps pouring wine into her glass until she is dizzy and drunk. This scene, set in the second chapter, 'Shek Kip Mei Village' (*Shi jia wei cun* 石碇尾村), marks an important point in the plot. The act of defloration is compared to Eve's banishment from the Garden of Eden, and Mingzhong's first experience of sex is the start of her moral decay. Leaving Garden Eden can be read as the point when she decides to leave Arcadia to seek Elysium, the higher level of (moral) perfection. A successful development involves the concepts of Arcadia and Elysium and shows humanity's moral progression from naïve and paradisiacal Arcadia to elevated and conscious Elysium. The journey from one to the other embodies mankind's quest for perfection.

When Satan¹⁷ sees Eve lying in the shade of a tree he sneaks up her legs. He wants to eat the delicious fruit. She frowns and shakes Satan away. He smiles and says: 'If you eat this fruit you will grow wiser. Life is like this: at the beginning it is bitter and painful, but as soon as it starts to become better, you will savour its never-ending taste'. Eve shakes her head: 'Don't you understand? God will punish us!' [Satan continues:] 'Look, this garden has no colours; we are drowning in loneliness and bored to death! So, you know what, we'll give it a try. I'll show you a place of delights and we'll have fun!' Satan has already moved and rests on her body. While Eve eats the forbidden fruit, heaven and earth start to tremble. A piece of red cloud falls upon a snow-white cloth. Satan has opened a gate for Adam; he too tries the forbidden fruit in order to understand not just God's will but also the moral order of the secular world. As a result Eve is banished from the Garden of Eden. In the first rays of the morning sun, Eve sees her naked body cleaving to Adam's. She has arrived in the human world.¹⁸

¹⁶ Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 5–6.

¹⁷ In the novel it is explicitly Satan and not the snake, as in the Bible. See Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*), 44.

¹⁸ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 44–45.

For Mingzhong, defloration means not just the loss of her youth (*qingchchun* 青春) and innocence but also the beginning of her moral and physical decay through her consumption of alcohol and sex. Sexuality is an important part of the female protagonist's growing process and has a different meaning for female than for male heroes. Sexual initiation can be liberating, freeing a woman of inhibiting familial bonds through sexuality as a weapon. '[The] female protagonist or *Bildungsheld* must chart a treacherous course between the penalties of expressing sexuality and suppressing it, between the costs of inner concentration and of direct confrontation with society, between the price of succumbing to madness and of grasping a repressive "normality"'.¹⁹

After the night of her defloration she struggles with her role as a prostitute. After a while she realizes that she has two sides which alternate during the day. In Chapter 3, 'Struck by Misfortune' (*lie jie* 歷劫), Mingzhong gradually begins to change. On one occasion she asks a client in despair:

'Mr. Zou, can I ask you ... How many souls does a person have? You know, I don't understand myself any more. My heart has changed. After drinking a glass of wine on the first night I changed into another person! The following morning my soul awoke at daybreak and I disliked the person I had become, a Ms. Lee. In the evening I long for us to be close and intimate ... Even so, by next morning I will already hate you a bit! It seems to me that the person in the morning is disappearing little by little, and I'm becoming more and more like the girl I am in the evening. How does any of this make sense?'

'You're still young, Mingzhong. You don't understand how life is. It's just one big mystery'.²⁰

The protagonist is not only living between two worlds, her attitude towards life has also changed. Mingzhong wishes for an ecstatic (*tongkuai* 痛快) life and to live it to the fullest at any price. Knowing that men prefer a girl or wife who is docile (*anjing* 安靜), a quality she is unable to provide, she finally accepts her life as a prostitute.

¹⁹ Abel, Hirsch, and Langland, *The Voyage In*, 12f.

²⁰ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*), 75.

The life changes that Mingzhong experiences are noticed by her mother, who tries to warn her, but Mingzhong replies that she has no choice since she has to make a living. If she does not adapt to the circumstances they will simply die of starvation. It was a conscious choice to follow the path of a prostitute and fallen woman for the sake of her mother's survival. She is carrying out her filial duty. Mingzhong has given up pursuing a life as a docile woman and chooses to live life as it pleases her. By consciously adopting life as a prostitute she is actively doing her duty, abandoning herself completely to it as society demands. Mingzhong makes it very clear that the traditional moral values and principles that her mother upholds and seeks to preserve are outdated and have no place in modern society. The passage below, from Chapter 4, 'Wind and Rain; Trials and Hardships' (*fengyu* 風雨), illustrates her view of life and marriage:

One night Mrs. Huang is sitting under the lamp. She is knitting, and starts to chat with her daughter. She hesitates at first, then she says: 'You've changed very much this year, Mingzhong!'

'Mother, how can we not? If we don't change, we'll all starve to death. There was one day when I almost went crazy! Now I don't care any more. I want to feel joy and pleasure day after day and just live as happily as I can!'

'If other people starts to talk, it will not always be pleasant to hear it.'

'Mum, people are talking [about me], so what? I know they say I'm a slut. Whenever a woman dates several men she gets called slut. Well, I agree it's not easy to stick to one's principles. How many sluts have there been throughout history? Who even knows what kind of skills they had?'

'My child is talking nonsense!' She stops knitting and looks at her.

'Mum, you've stuck to the Rites of Zhou [which forbid sex outside marriage] your whole life. You won't understand the relationship between man and woman'.²¹

After a heated discussion between them about whether D. H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is an appropriate book for young girls as it includes such topics as adultery and sex, the mother eventually gives in, but not without giving Mingzhong the important advice that marrying and settling down with a husband are essential in life:

²¹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 95f.

Mrs. Huang takes off her reading glasses and clasps her hands together. After a long moment's thought, she says 'Mingzhong, you should not overstrain yourself and keep making a scene. A person needs a home, a place to settle'.²²

Mingzhong ponders the meaning of home and its value in a money-oriented society again in Chapter 5, 'The Poisoned Dragon Pond' (*du longtan* 毒龙潭).²³ All of sudden she visualises a paragraph from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* describing how Connie is faced with the same moral dilemma as she is herself. But, internalizing the text, Mingzhong seems to have an epiphany and agrees with the book:

She sits straight up and her toes reach the floor. Suddenly sentences flash in front of her eyes. The book is turned to page 76. She sees roughly-scratched words running like a red thread through the sentences: "Home!" ... it was a warm word to use for that great, weary warren. But then it was a word that had had its day. It was somehow cancelled. All the great words were cancelled for her generation: love, joy, happiness, home, mother, father, husband, all these great, dynamic words were half dead now, and dying from day to day. Home was a place you lived in, love was a thing you didn't fool yourself about, joy was a word you applied to a good Charleston, happiness was a term of hypocrisy used to bluff other people'. She follows the red thread and recites the words; they touch her heart! She shouts repeatedly: 'Yes, yes, right!'²⁴

The author's choice of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is interesting. The novel's depiction of love and personal relationships conveys a modern view of sexual morals which contrasts with those in *The Hotel*. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* represents modern moral principles which Mingzhong questions and challenges in *The Hotel*. The cohesion between body and mind in a marital relationship runs like a thread through *The Hotel*: she decides to sell her body as a commodity and later experiences the stark contrast between her mind and her body when she starts having sex with men and her 'soul changes'. She is seeking integrity, a way to join mind and body, but in the end is consumed by carnal lust and loses her mind.

²² Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 96.

²³ She also believes that money is essential. See Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 110.

²⁴ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 109.

According to Abel and Hirsch the Bildungsroman emphasizes an 'interplay of psychological and social forces'. A 'successful *Bildung* requires the existence of a social context that will facilitate the unfolding of inner capacities, leading the young person from ignorance and innocence to wisdom and maturity'. The protagonist's growth and development depend on many external elements which make it 'a relative concept coloured by many interrelated factors, including class, history, and gender'. The latter 'modifies every aspect of a particular Bildungsroman: its narrative structure, its implied psychology, its representations of social pressures', as heroines undergo a different path of development from their male counterparts, who encounter another set of choices and social options. Unlike the Bildungsromans with male protagonists, 'female fictions of development reflect the tensions between the assumptions of a genre that embodies male norms and the values of its female protagonists'.²⁵ As Camilla Brändström points out, 'women in fiction who violate the norms and refuse to follow this female pattern of development are perceived as rebels and they end up unhappy or insane'.²⁶ Moreover, '[t]he female development plot may engender other formal revisions of the *Bildungsroman*. Novels that depict female apprenticeship and awakening not only alter the developmental process, but also frequently change its position in the text. The tensions that shape female development may lead to a disjunction between the surface plot, which affirms social conventions, and the submerged plot, which encodes rebellion'.²⁷

It is interesting to note how *The Hotel* illustrates traditional moral ideals through the contrasting juxtaposition of Mingzhong and Bai Lushan, whose characters could not be more opposite. The latter provides a sense of stability and home, whereas Mingzhong sees the significance of marriage and family in society but does not want to accept the role traditionally ascribed to women. She knows her mother does not share her view and would rather see her married and

²⁵ Abel, Hirsch, and Langland, *The Voyage In*, 4–6, 11.

²⁶ Brändström, 'Gender and Genre : A Feminist Exploration of the Bildungsroman in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Martha Quest*', 6.

²⁷ Abel, Hirsch, and Langland, *The Voyage In*, 12.

settled.²⁸ Not only does Mingzhong not want to fulfil her role as a loyal wife, she also wants to revolt against the prescribed social norms, as she says: 'A person must have the courage and the determination to revolt, only then will there be a way to go; only he must walk fast, always one step ahead. If you are honest and follow the rules and conventions, you're finished!'²⁹ This revolt against tradition has already been raised by the narrator with regard to the male protagonist Chen Tiansheng (see Chapter 5): 'He does not have the courage himself to resist society, but he is willing to have a woman with the courage to revolt against the power of tradition'. While Mingzhong embodies at least this trait that Tiansheng seeks in a woman, he does not stay with her and she fails in her protest against traditional moral values when she goes insane. The novel portrays the confused coexistence of modern and pre-modern norms and values.

7.2 Huang Sicheng's *Love at Gulang Island*: 'Mutual understanding, empathy, and cooperation are what people needs in life'.

Huang Sicheng 黃思騁 (1919–1984), is the author of the novella *Love at Gulang Island*³⁰ which was serialized in 1953 in *Everyman's Literature* magazine (*Renren wenxue* 人人文學), of which he was editor-in-chief. He was born in Shaoxing 紹興 in the province of Zhejiang 浙江 and worked in a bank in Shanghai before moving to Hong Kong where he was an editor of *Everyman's Literature*. In 1960 he moved to Singapore and Malaysia. Three years later he returned to Hong Kong and took a teaching position at Shu Yan College. He died in 1984.³¹

²⁸ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*), 96.

²⁹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 97.

³⁰ The novel has two different titles: the serialized version is titled *Summer at Gulang Island* (*Gulangyu zhi xia* 鼓浪嶼之夏), whereas the book is called *Love at Gulang Island* (*Gulangyu zhi lian* 鼓浪嶼之戀).

³¹ Wang Jiancong 王劍叢, *Xianggang zuojia zhuanlüe* 香港作家傳略 (Short Biographies of Hong Kong Writers), 218; Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, *Xianggang wenxue zuojia zhuanlüe* 香港文學作家傳略 (Brief Biographies of Hong Kong Writers), 111–12.

Two years later after his death the *southbound* writer Li Kuang 力匡 remembered Huang in an obituary column in *Hong Kong Literature*, describing him as a fine writer of short stories and a devoted admirer of Guy de Maupassant and Anton Chekhov's short stories.³² Huang is said to have been an expert on Chekhov, although during his life he did not gain fame with his writing and struggled to make a living from it. The southbound literatus Ye Lingfeng 葉靈鳳 mentions Huang in an essay, in which he recalls that in spite of his strange outward appearance he was very literate: 'He gave me the impression that he was something of a well-read hippie: untidy in appearance, arrogant in behaviour; watching and sneering at this colourful world with folded arms'.³³

7.2.1 Plot synopsis

Love at Gulang Island is about 20-year-old A-Hong from Shanghai, whose mother sends him to visit an aunt on Gulang Island 鼓浪嶼 in Fujian province 福建 for his summer holiday.³⁴ After a boat journey during which he meets an elderly sailor A-Hong arrives at the island and meets his aunt and two cousins. He enjoys their simple life in nature, and when one of his cousins asks him to join her on a trip to the city he hesitates, arguing that living in Shanghai he got to know city life too well. Eventually he gives in and agrees to go with her to Xiamen, the next bigger city from Gulang Island.

One day he meets a fisherwoman and her daughter at the beach. A-Hong wants to experience the life of a fisher, and asks if he can join them when they put to sea. The simplicity of life on the boat leaves a strong impression on A-Hong, and he enjoys the fishing and the plain food with the mother and daughter. Back

³² Li Kuang 力匡, 'Guanyu A-Huang: Huang Sicheng 關於阿黃——黃思騁 (About A-Huang: Huang Sicheng)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 22 (5 October 1986): 22–23.

³³ Huang Nanxiang 黃南翔, 'Huang Sicheng buji er you zizhe 黃思騁不羈而又執着 (Huang Sicheng is not Rude, yet Persistent)', *Xiangjiang wentan* 香江文壇 (*Hong Kong Literary Circles*), no. 24 (December 2003): 49–50.

³⁴ In Wong's article, for which she uses *Everyman's Literature* as her source text, the protagonist is an 18-year-old boy. See Wong, 150. Gulang Island (*Gulang yu* 鼓浪嶼) is an pedestrian-only island of the coast of Xiamen 廈門 that can be reached by ferry.

at the aunt's house A-Hong talks with his male cousin about life and its limitations. The next day he accompanies his female cousin to a bar in the city. As he had anticipated, he despises city life and people.

An argument with his uncle causes him to run away from home and he heads for the beach where he first met the fisherwoman and girl. After a long search he finds them, but the mother has suddenly become sick and died. The girl mourns her mother and disappears, and while A-Hong is looking for her he gets sick and is later found by his aunt. They return to her house, where he realizes during a talk with his female cousin that she would be a better match for him than the fishergirl. He plans to return to Shanghai with his cousin while his male cousin stays on Gulang Island with the fishergirl until he finishes school. The story ends with A-Hong and his female cousin on the boat to Shanghai and his other cousin and the fishergirl stand at the harbour and bidding them farewell.

7.2.2 *Analysis*

The novel consists of twenty-four chapters and is written from the first-person perspective. It begins with a description of the circumstances that have led to A-Hong's journey to Gulang Island: '[d]uring a summer vacation when I was 20 years old, my aunt from Gulang Island wrote a letter to my mother and asked her to come and spend a holiday with them'. A-Hong's mother is unable to go, but sends A-Hong in her place. This is the point of his departure on his journey. Susanne Howe describes the voyage in terms of the apprentice coming-of-age novel:

The adolescent hero of the typical 'apprentice' novel sets out on his way through the world, meets with reverses usually due to his own temperament, falls in with various guides and counsellors, makes many false starts in choosing his friends, his wife, and his life work, and finally adjusts himself in some way to the demands of his time and environment by finding a sphere of action in which he may work effectively.³⁵

³⁵ Howe, *Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen*, 4.

Setting off on a journey is essential for the growth and maturity of the Bildungsroman hero. On this trip to Gulang Island the 20-year-old philosophy student is alone for the first time and no any longer under the tutelage of his mother. He reflects as his journey begins: 'My mother kept a close watch on every single move I made. I can't relax a bit'.³⁶ Leaving home means that he is free of social and family constraints, allowing him to encounter the world as an individual. This summer trip is a spiritual and life-changing experience for A-Hong; who reports that '[o]nce the ship was offshore, I felt relaxed leaving the city's dusk and noise behind. Although I had lived by the sea for more than ten years I had never seen the sea, not to mention experienced life on a ship'.³⁷ Being on the sea is a unique experience for him and his interest and enthusiasm show a desire to become a seaman.³⁸ His opinion of the city does not change throughout the novel. He is grateful to escape it because he gets the chance to marvel at the beauty of nature. When A-Hong arrives at the Island he gets off the boat: 'I could hardly believe that such a beautiful island existed on earth'.³⁹ It is clear that he favours the country over the city, and he marvels at his aunt's beautiful home in 'such a nice environment'.⁴⁰

City and city culture and nature serve in this context as binary opposites which are embodied in the two female characters, cousin Ji and A-Gui, who each represent different values. The appearance and ways of life of the two girls are different. The cousin cares how she appears to people and likes to dress in fancy clothes and jewellery, whereas A-Gui's humble clothing is worn through and is anything but chic and extravagant. A-Gui is described as well-built and strong due to her daily work as a fisherwoman, whereas the cousin's body is rather ordinary. The cousin is keen to spend time with her friends in the city and at clubs, while

³⁶ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, *Gulangyu zhi lian 鼓浪嶼之戀 (Love at Gulang Island)* (Hong Kong: Xianggang wenfeng shudian 香港文風書店 (Man Fung Book Store), n.d.), 1.

³⁷ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 1.

³⁸ In the scene followed A-Hong has a daydream about life as a pirate. See Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 16.

³⁹ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 5.

⁴⁰ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 7.

A-Gui cannot pursue such a lifestyle as she and her mother have to fish for their livelihood.

One day A-Hong and Cousin Ji are heading for the beach for the day. Cousin Ji is dressed up. A-Hong disapproves of her dress style, noticing that ‘cousin Ji had been dressing up for a good hour until she was ready and jumped down the stairs. Today she had tied a pink bow in her hair and wore a cocktail dress, as if going to a banquet. She had put on earrings and a bracelet and wore stilettos that were not suitable for the season’.⁴¹ A-Hong asks himself if that is what she is going to wear to the beach, but says nothing, keeping his thoughts to himself. His choice of clothes is a short-sleeved check shirt, white canvas shorts and sneakers, as he generally does not bother about how he looks: ‘[a]s far as I was concerned I had never cared much about it. I thought clothes had no value for people, were only there to demonstrate humans’ civilization to the animals’.⁴² But when he hears his cousin’s high heels click-clacking on the street and sees her jewellery sparkling in the sun he eventually remarks: ‘Sister Ji, this dress style certainly makes you look beautiful, but it is not in harmony with the nature around here’.⁴³

The fisherwoman and her daughter A-Gui, with whom the protagonist falls in love, represent the simple and pure life that A-Hong wants to pursue. Shortly after dreaming about a pirate ship on the sea, A-Hong spots a little boat on the shore where he meets the fisherwomen for the first time and notices that ‘this old woman was tanned by the sea, the wind, and the sun’.⁴⁴ A-Hong expresses his strong wish to be on a fishing boat and to take part in their daily routine, and asks the old woman to take him with her, offering her money, which she refuses. On the boat A-Hong sees their modest equipment (‘We don’t even have a cup to drink from’)⁴⁵ as the mother prepares the food. He asks for some of the same food they are having, and they share a simple meal of vegetables and brown rice; plain food

⁴¹ Huang Sicheng 黄思骐, 13f.

⁴² Huang Sicheng 黄思骐, 14.

⁴³ Huang Sicheng 黄思骐, 15.

⁴⁴ Huang Sicheng 黄思骐, 17.

⁴⁵ Huang Sicheng 黄思骐, 19.

which A-Hong finds delicious.⁴⁶ He recounts how refreshing (*xinxian* 新鮮) this boat experience is and has the impression that the sea can provide anything one needs. He shares this thought with his male cousin: '[t]he seaside is indeed a place full of life. The whole day today I did so many things'.⁴⁷

However, the feeling I got from that day was that I could not help feeling emotionally attached. A-Gui was nowhere near as beautiful as my cousin. The differences in their appearance reflected their differences of character. But by comparison [with cousin Ji] a simple, honest, reserved, soft and virtuous young girl aroused a different kind of sympathy in me.⁴⁸

The fishergirl, A-Gui, plays a crucial role in the protagonist's identity formation. She shows him that nature can provide everything a person needs, and during the course of the story he realizes that it is not material possessions that define the quality of life and human relationships. The fishergirl seems to embody this and her appearance attracts A-Hong on sight:

She was a very simple and honest fishergirl. She had dark skin, a mature body and a pair of expressive eyes. Her nose was somewhat fleshy but straight, and her wide mouth revealed a set of straight teeth. A long braid dangled from her back and she wore matching clothes of a cheap Japanese cotton print, under which showed two well-shaped feet. She seemed to have the roughness of the boat, and she left an energetic and compelling impression on me.⁴⁹

A-Gui is the embodiment of the ocean. A-Hong compares her qualities with those of the sea: '[s]he was a person whose character and appearance benefitted from the sea; her eyes resembled the sea, seeming as deep and mysterious as the ocean. Her reserve and candid character were like the sea, her mood changed like the sea, and she was as thoughtful as the sea'.⁵⁰ Only by witnessing the fishergirl and her way of life does A-Hong realize life's true values:

⁴⁶ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 17, 22.

⁴⁷ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 33.

⁴⁸ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 30.

⁴⁹ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 18.

⁵⁰ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 22.

Mutual understanding, empathy, and cooperation are what people need in life. I came from another region to this strange place, arriving at this little boat. Amidst all this, money, schooling, looks, habits, and feelings held us oceans apart, yet trying to cooperate was the best way to achieve an understanding. We could meet each other halfway and discard the bias, which took all kinds of hostile shapes. And now I felt that I had already arrived at their circles in life.⁵¹

A-Hong is aware of the fishergirl's physical strength, which he himself lacks: '[f]or instance in comparison with A-Gui she was stronger. So it was clear that she had absorbed all the nutrition she needed from her food, while for my part, most of it had been flushed down the toilet'.⁵² A-Hong is drawn to her in many ways, and therefore it is surprising and unexpected when in a plot twist towards the end of the novel he decides not to stay with her and wants to be with his cousin Ji instead. In the meantime cousin Ji has changed and become humbler, as A-Hong notices: 'I looked at my cousin carefully and realized that she had already become much more modest. She wore a cheongsam with a casual flower print, white socks, and flat shoes. She had much less rouge and powder on her face, and her skin seemed a bit tanned'.⁵³ A-Hong is discovering a new side to her: 'I had never seen such a sincere and kind-hearted expression on my cousin's face before'.⁵⁴ He concludes that his male cousin would be a better match for A-Gui than he was, and that his cousin Ji would be a better match for him:

I had thought earlier that if my cousin was to become less melancholy, he would have to do it with the help of a change to his way of life. I was more or less convinced that a girl like A-Gui was more suited to my cousin than to me and that it would be better for A-Gui to be with my cousin than with me. Because A-Gui should not be with someone overly active like me; she needed someone patient, steady, and considerate, and my cousin had exactly those traits. And as far as I was concerned I needed a girl who was lively, spirited, and proactive. And in this A-Gui clearly did not fit my ideal.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 25.

⁵² Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 79.

⁵³ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 112.

⁵⁴ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 115.

⁵⁵ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 119f.

After this consideration A-Hong is convinced that he has found the perfect matches for his male cousin and himself and very soon they plan together how they will spend their lives: A-Hong and cousin Ji will go back to Shanghai, where he will finish his studies, and his male cousin will stay with the fishergirl at Gulang Island. The final scene is set in the harbour in Shanghai, where A-Hong's mother picks them up from the ship and as they walk through the dockyard the couple hint that they want to get married.

The coming-of-age novel *Love at Gulang Island* reflects and reproduces the binary image of nature versus culture, as shown by the protagonist's view of city life. A-Hong lives and comes from the city and arrives in a place that changes his life and supports his way of thinking. He appreciates the natural landscape and learns from life on the sea through the fishergirl and her mother. The city, by contrast, offers him nothing, and he is somewhat disgusted by the people, who seem to him superficial. A-Hong witnesses how 'the people's feelings were numbed by the materialistic life' of the city.⁵⁶ He avoids the city and does not fit into his cousin's circle of friends, whom he criticizes sharply: '[t]hose few young strangers all had a superficial and sleek manner that repel people'.⁵⁷ The most important lesson for A-Hong during his summer holiday is that inner values such as honesty, empathy, compassion, and consideration are essential for building interpersonal relationships. Outward appearances and material possessions are not important, and may only serve to cloud one's judgment. Nonetheless, a reconciliation between nature and culture is possible: people, as in the case of the cousin Ji, can change for the better and adopt different values. A-Hong leaves a strong impression on his female cousin and acts as a role model whom she looks up to. By the end of novel the extravagant city girl has become a modest and humble person who gives up the glamour of the city for love after finding life's true moral and spiritual values.

⁵⁶ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 15.

⁵⁷ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 47.

7.3 Qi Huang's *Yindi: A Barcarolle*

Qi Huang 齊桓 is the pen name of the writer Sun Shuxian 孫述憲, who was born in Guangdong in 1930 and died in Hong Kong in 2018. As a child he spent some years at an elementary school in Hong Kong during the Second Sino-Japanese war. In 1946 he was admitted to Nankai University 南開大學 in Tianjin 天津 and after his studies he left Mainland China in 1950 and settled in Hong Kong. From the 1950s he devoted himself to writing, producing a diverse body of work including novels, poems, essays, articles, reviews, and translations of foreign novels. Qi Huang was editor-in-chief of the magazines *Everyman's Library* (*Renren wencong* 人人文叢) and *Everyman's Literature* (*Renren wenxue* 人人文學). In the 1960s he worked as a journalist for the *New York Times*.⁵⁸

7.3.1 Plot synopsis

Qi Huang's short story *Yindi: A Barcarolle* (*Yindi* 銀弟) was published in the magazine *Everyman's Literature* in May 1953. It consists of three chapters and is written from the third-person perspective. The story begins with a scene on a boat where the teenage fishergirl, Yindi, has a sleepless night during which she recalls her first encounter with A-Fa, a young man who lives and works at his father's boat equipment store by the sea in Hong Kong and is now her boyfriend. She is restless and eventually gets up. Her thoughts stray to her boyfriend. They met when A-Fa was called to repair a leak in their boat, and she was unable to forget his eyes. Yindi met him for a second time when she went to the store for a new oar. After that A-Fa frequently visited the typhoon shelter where their boat was kept. Once Yindi's vessel keeled over and got stuck in the mudflats and A-Fa came to the rescue, and afterwards she has felt drawn to him because he gives her a sense of security ('When brother A-Fa shows up, everything is fine.').⁵⁹ They

⁵⁸ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, *Xianggang wenxue zuojia zhuanlüe* 香港文學作家傳略 (Brief Biographies of Hong Kong Writers), 781–82.

⁵⁹ Qi Heng 齊桓, 'Yindi 銀弟 (A Barcarolle)', in *Xianggang dangdai zuojia zuopin heji xuan, xiaoshuo juan* 香港當代作家作品合集選, 小說卷 (Selected Works by Contemporary Hong Kong Writers

start to date, and very soon talk about getting married, although Yindi feels sad to think that once she is married to A-Fa she will have to give up her life on the boat. Pondering over these past events make her feel sleepy and she goes back to bed. The next morning she gets up and eating breakfast with her father the thought slips into her mind that very soon she will be leaving him and this life. The final scene describes A-Fa appearing on the shore and walking towards the boat.

7.3.2 *Analysis*

This story portrays a young fishergirl's hopes, desires, and fears for the future, and it is more about her psychological than her actual journey.⁶⁰ During a restless night Yindi thinks about what has happened since meeting A-Fa and what is yet to come. She is excited about the future but already nostalgic about giving up her life as a fishergirl when she marries A-Fa.

Both protagonists are portrayed as strong and healthy people who live by and on the sea, leading simple lives. A-Fa's outward appearance particularly stands out; he is described as a sturdy fellow. Yindi is instantly impressed by his muscular physique, the result of his manual labour at the boat shop. She recalls meeting him for the second time: as he washed his hands his pushed-up sleeves embraced his arms tightly.⁶¹ Another time Yindi remembers his strong chest: '[b]ut at that moment A-Fa shows up; he is wearing a pair wooden clogs and a shirt that he has not bothered to button. His cotton singlet reveals a broad chest. He is striding along, humming a tune'.⁶² Yindi, too, is described as a shapely and healthy girl: '[a]fterwards, they sit side by side at the vessel's bow and A-Fa kicks the seawater with his foot. He puts his strong arm around Yindi's healthy

and [Their] Novels), ed. Ye Si 也斯, Ye Hui 葉輝, and Zheng Zhengheng 鄭政恆, vol. 1 (Hong Kong: Mingbao yuekan chubanshe 明報月刊出版社, 2011), 56.

⁶⁰ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 'Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s', 151.

⁶¹ Qi Heng 齊恆, 'Yindi 銀弟 (A Barcarolle)', 54.

⁶² Qi Heng 齊恆, 55. Later in the story, Yindi is able to recognize him by his bounding strides. See Qi Heng 齊恆, 58.

merwoman waist'.⁶³ Although A-Fa likes Yindi the way she is she is considering changing to become modern and fashionable, but after listening to A-Fa's point of view she drops that idea:

They are dating when Yindi proposes learning to ride a bicycle and perming her hair. A-Fa immediately tells her not to do these modern things, and that women should be down-to-earth and sincere. Learning such dud and fake stuff is harmful, as in the case of A-Fa's sister, who followed the modern trend and was cheated and left for Singapore. Now nobody knows her whereabouts. Yindi listens to his words and is very happy to know in her heart that A-Fa and San-shu [her father] would get along very well.⁶⁴

A-Fa wants his girlfriend to stay pure and simple, which is how he believes women should be. Being modern and not true to oneself can only end in disaster and unhappiness, for women at least. Yindi agrees with A-Fa in a way, not wanting to pursue modern ways if her boyfriend does not agree with them. In the end, all Yindi dreams of is marrying A-Fa one day and having a family.⁶⁵ Thus her spiritual growth starts from her pure and modest simple life and develops through her experience of love and companionship, which help her to realise the true values in life and her role as a woman. At the end of the novel she acknowledges her place in the world.

7.4 The importance of tradition in materialistic colonial Hong Kong

The Hotel, Love at Gulang Island, and Yindi: A Barcarolle reflect the importance of traditional values against the backdrop of modern 1950s Hong Kong society, which was in a state of flux. They convey the view that adhering to traditional and inner values protects against losing oneself in a changing society whose complexity cannot be fully grasped. Interestingly the female characters embody the two opposing possibilities of traditional and modern values, with the latter presented as superficial, fleeting, and unreliable. Traditional values, the central

⁶³ Qi Heng 齊恒, 'Yindi 銀弟 (A Barcarolle)', 56.

⁶⁴ Qi Heng 齊恒, 56.

⁶⁵ Qi Heng 齊恒, 58.

motif of the three novel, are scrutinized and their applicability and actuality reevaluated. These values adopt a different meaning as they are accessed and comprehended from new positions and views. The city has a liberating effect on the heroines, showing the negative characteristics of growing up in the city. Cao Juren's *The Hotel* portrays a pleasure-seeking and lustful woman who chooses a wrong path and denies that woman's role must be marriage, a husband, home, and family. Her chosen path leads Mingzhong to challenge and reevaluate the prescribed values and norms, and this guides her to her individual *Bildung*. At the end of the novel Mingzhong's perseverance despite her madness implies the likelihood that she will recover rather than surrender to it, and will start again with an enlightened view of life. *Love at Gulang Island* and *Yindi: A Barcarolle*, on the other hand, depict a retreat to nature and two fishergirls who represent youth and vitality. They emphasize the importance of personal relationships and personal inner values. The key theme is the pursuit of simplicity, sincerity, integrity, and empathy in life, and how a modern lifestyle can obstruct these values. These novels not only affirm but strongly advocate pre-modern values in many ways as the only values of importance in Hong Kong's alien, money-orientated, and materialistic society.

Summary

The three Bildungsromans discussed in this chapter show that as well as fostering cultural nationalism the migrant literati advocated adherence to traditional and moral values to counter the prevailing isolation and commodification of people in Hong Kong. These Chinese émigré writers held the view that Hong Kong lacked depth and humanity and they criticised its cold, indifferent society, which prevented the establishment of intimate relationships, due to the Hongkongers' pursuit of a hedonistic and shallow way of life. The southbound literati found that society in colonial Hong Kong was in stark contrast to the society they had known on the Mainland, which had taught them a different set of beliefs. In the novels the path of development and *Bildung* starts in Hong Kong, where the protagonists reevaluate and question the prevailing values and beliefs and leads to the countryside or the homeland, where they challenge established values from their enlightened point of view. Traditional values and their preservation are important in this context as a way of retaining their link with the homeland, and provide them with the moral and spiritual sustenance that they had been unable to find in Hong Kong society.

8 THE BILDUNGSROMAN AND ALIENATION FROM HONG KONG AND THE CITY

The southbound writers who came from the north to Hong Kong had conflicting views of the city for many reasons: first, they had left their homeland for another part of China's native soil which they expected to find familiar but, ruled by foreigners as it was, it felt alien to them, and with the addition of financial hardship they found it difficult to adjust both socially and culturally. They found themselves foreigners among the Western foreigners and Hong Kong locals, but living in a city that they saw as Chinese. The majority of the intellectuals originated from the north and had arrived from one of China's cultural centres, Shanghai. The writer Cao Juren 曹聚仁 vividly remembered his trip to Hong Kong: '[a]fter the train passed Shaoguan 韶關 I went deeper into a strange place in the southern part of China. The subtropical scenery, the language, the customs are also significantly different'.¹ Second, as migrants who only thought of Hong Kong as a temporary shelter, the writers generally expressed a critical and dismissive attitude to Hong Kong society in their work.² They witnessed in the colonial city, for instance, the popularization and commercialization of literature in general, and in particular the rise of pulp fiction (thirty-cent fiction). They were unhappy with both the colonial government and Hong Kong's materialistic and money-oriented culture.

In this context the southbound writers expressed their feeling of alienation from Hong Kong society in their writing and criticized the colony's decadent culture, at the same time idealizing its rural landscape and nature.

¹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Caifang xinji 採訪新記* (Reports with New Notes), 6.

² Wang Jiaqi 王家祺, "Wo de xin reng zai beifang de gaoyuan": cong "hailan" kan wushi niandai nanlai zuojia de wenxue shengchan 「我的心仍在北方的高原」——從「海瀾」看五十年代南來作家的文學生產 ("My Heart Still Belongs to the North Plateau": The Literary Output of the Southbound Literati in the 1950s from the Perspective of "Hailan")', 100f.

Alienation and loss of innocence and purity play a crucial part in their novels, leading to the protagonist's *Bildung*: from the initial stage of overcoming alienation and innocence to the point where he/she reflects on the notion of community and society. In this regard madness, as depicted in *The Hotel*, can be interpreted as a sign of not only individual failure but also a failure of society that, oddly enough, refers to the future through Mingzhong's perseverance; it shows that she might possibly recover from her madness some time.

The dichotomy between city and country was a common theme in the Hong Kong literature and films of the 1950s, particularly in migrant literature. In the article 'From Cities in Hong Kong Cinema to Urban Cinema in Hong Kong', the literary scholar Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] discusses the different representations of cities in films of the period, pointing out that 'certain films ... depicted the city as a symbol of evil and cunning, and the country as a symbol of purity and sincerity'. Liang concludes that 'the "wicked city" motif is a fitting symbol of the realistic situation of Hong Kong, emphasising its bad living conditions, selfishness and greed in human relationships'.³ According to Ji Hongfang 計紅芳 Hong Kong was the diametric opposite of the values advocated by the migrant intellectuals from the Mainland:

What they try to express are their memories of past experiences on the Mainland with which they tell about resistance against the fate of exile and materialistic life. It should be noted that the "village" here refers not merely to the opposite of the "city", it includes the whole of the Mainland with its historical and cultural significance, which stands in opposition to foreign Hong Kong. Therefore the village, the native place, the land, the history, their previous life and experiences, and traditional ethnic culture are all summarized in the notion of "village".⁴

The following four examples demonstrate how the southbound literati described and portrayed the city in general and Hong Kong in particular as a place providing

³ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'From Cities in Hong Kong to Hong Kong Films about Cities', 29.

⁴ Ji Hongfang 計紅芳, 'Xianggang nanlai zuojia huaixiang muti de sanchongzou 香港南來作家懷想母體的三重奏 (The Maternal Nostalgia of the Hong Kong's Southbound Literati in Three Movements)', 25.

the protagonists of their Hong Kong coming-of-age novels with a set of negative moral principles and spiritual beliefs that allowed them to compare and challenge established values. *Bildung*, the hero's growth and evolution, occurs when these characters come to realize and comprehend the internalized values dictated by Hong Kong's society and the community.

8.1 Cao Juren's *The Hotel*: 'Hong Kong's food is not easy to eat'.

The Hotel shows the many ways in which the lives of its characters are doomed by social and political circumstances. As discussed in Chapter 5, the protagonist Chen Tiansheng 陳天聲 blames the political situation that caused him to leave his country and start a new life in the British colony. The female protagonist Huang Mingzhong and her family suffer a similar fate. After the Communist victory over the Nationalists in 1949, Mingzhong's father, who worked in a bank, was transferred to Guangzhou. His wife and daughter followed, but two days before they were to be reunited the father died in a plane accident during a business trip. Mingzhong and her mother settle in Hong Kong. *The Hotel* portrays Chinese migrants who have lost everything and their struggle to cope with their new life. They find Hong Kong, a city ruled by the British, different to their expectations in many ways. The Chinese migrants neither belonged to the local Hong Kong people, whose Cantonese dialect they could not understand, nor to the foreigners and expatriates, as described by Chen Tiansheng 陳天聲 and his family's contradictory impressions when they arrive in Hong Kong from Mainland China:

They arrive at this place that they do not understand, neither by looking nor by listening. This is a place in China, and yet it also not a place in China. It is full of Chinese people, but they do not look entirely like Chinese. It is a place that has everything, and a place that also has nothing. This is heaven for the rich; they [Chen Tiansheng and his family] believe they have already arrived in heaven.⁵

The Hotel criticizes Hong Kong's materialistic and hedonistic way of life, its people losing touch with important moral and human values while the city

⁵ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian 酒店 (The Hotel)*, 157.

nurtures moral decay via alcohol, sex, and gambling. The migrants feel lost and abandoned.⁶ The novel portrays the social and moral decay of the female protagonist and shows Hong Kong society as condescending and antagonistic. When Huang Mingzhong is desperate to make a living Mrs. Zhang persuades her to consider prostitution, saying, as Mingzhong hesitates, “[w]hen you have arrived in this world of Hong Kong that “laughs at the poor and not at a prostitute”, how much would “reputation” be actually worth?”⁷ And in another example, when Mingzhong is about to leave for the brothel her mother, unaware that she is a prostitute, warns her and advises: ‘Child, I understand, you go then! But take care of yourself, Hong Kong is a world that eats people up!’⁸ Hong Kong is described as place that preys even on those at the bottom of society.

An important message in *The Hotel* is that money makes the world go round in Hong Kong, and without it one can only suffer. In the third chapter Mingzhong decides to stay in Hotel M, as the area where she and her mother had a shelter has burned down and she has nowhere else to go. One morning she overhears some women and a man complaining about the expense of life in Hong Kong and how everything is about money, without which you cannot survive. The man says: ‘Miss, if you want a happy and prosperous life, then you shouldn’t have come to do business at the pier. Hong Kong’s food is not easy to eat.’⁹

Working as a dance girl requires Mingzhong to change her appearance. She puts on makeup, rouge, lipstick, and perfume. Her mother notices her new makeup and wonders at her style, telling her only not to waste her hard-earned money. Mingzhong replies ‘Mum, a place like Hong Kong only respects clothes,

⁶ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 154.

⁷ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 39.

⁸ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 40. The phrase ‘Hong Kong is a world that eats people up’ refers explicitly to Lu Xun’s 鲁迅 short story *The Diary of a Madman* (1918), which contains the sentence ‘he would still be someone who eats people’ (*ye rengren shi chiren de ren* 也仍然是吃人的人). Lu Xun, “Chinese Short Stories of the Twentieth Century,” in *The Diary of a Madman*, trans. Zhihua Fang (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 3–22.

⁹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiudian* 酒店 (*The Hotel*), 57.

not people. It's not possible not to dress up! They even say I dress too modestly!'¹⁰ Mingzhong's mother finds this reasonable and nods; she seems relieved.

The Hotel illustrates Mingzhong's transformation from an innocent girl to a woman who seduces and manipulates men for her own benefit, showing that change is necessary for survival. Mingzhong adapts to her circumstances, but only because she is forced to do so by the cruel reality of Hong Kong, saying 'Mother, how can we not? If we don't change we'll all starve to death. There was one day when I almost went crazy!'¹¹ Mingzhong embodies this necessity; if Hong Kong's society is that way then the people must adapt, as Lindi recalls: 'Mingzhong is actually a kind and honest person in her heart. I know her better than you, and in only about a year she has become such a selfish person ... This society is too spoiled. Anyone who falls into a tub of dye will change colour'.¹² Society and politics are always in a state of flux and the people are observers who just go along with the circumstances, as Chen Tiansheng 陳天聲 says: 'Mrs. Huang, the whole world is changing. We came from the Mainland and the Mainland is changing. We are in Macao and Macao is changing. Everybody may have all kinds of contradictory views. Who can predict what changes the future, tomorrow, the next quarter of an hour will bring?'¹³

This coming-of-age novel not only shows the growth and formation of the female protagonist, Mingzhong, it also demonstrates a *Bildung* in a society subject to transition, which is achieved by overcoming alienation and materialism that the city engenders.

8.2 Huang Sicheng's *Love at Gulang Island*: '... I am looking for the essence of nature'.

Love at Gulang Island praises the beauty and advantages of being in nature, unlike many Bildungsromans in which the hero sets off to grow and mature in the city.

¹⁰ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 63.

¹¹ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 95.

¹² Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 192.

¹³ Cao Juren 曹聚仁, 223.

As Jack Hendriksen points out, a major feature of the Western Bildungsroman is the path from the country to the city, where the protagonist is introduced to 'real life' and encounters 'good and evil through which he formulates his moral and/or ethical code; and ... sex and/or love, which reflect his developing maturity'.¹⁴ The city provides the hero with a particular set of values and possibilities which pave his way in life. Jerome Buckley, in his 1974 *Seasons of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*, describes the move from the country to the city common in the English Bildungsroman as follows:

A child of some sensibility grows up in the country or in a provincial town, where he finds constraints, social and intellectual, placed upon the free imagination. ... He therefore, sometimes at a quite early age, leaves the repressive atmosphere of home (and also the relative innocence) to make his way independently to the city ... There his real 'education' begins, not only his preparation for a career but also ... his direct experience of urban life.¹⁵

It is interesting that in *Love at Gulang Island* the protagonist, A-Hong, retreats from an urban to a the rural locale to find self-development.¹⁶ A-Hong encounters crucial elements of life on the beautiful island and in and on the sea: the good – the countryside, nature, the fisherwomen; the bad – the city, selfishness, money; and love – the fishergirl A-Gui, cousin Ji, that together guide him to maturity. It demonstrates the stages of a *Bildung* that follows the path of the (innocent) hero from the city, which he finds repressive and retreats to the rural locale, to return to the city as a mature and enlightened young man with new insight after comprehending the values of the rural.

The protagonist's withdrawal to the countryside can be read as Huang's critique of Hong Kong and feeling of alienation from city life. According to Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], he had been living in Hong Kong for three years before publishing *Love at Gulang Island* in 1953. This reversed path may

¹⁴ Jack Hendriksen, *This Side of Paradise as a Bildungsroman*, American University Studies American Literature (New York, Bern: Peter Lang, 1993), 32.

¹⁵ Buckley, *Season of Youth*, 17–18.

¹⁶ Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 142–43.

have been a way of showing his ‘dissatisfaction with the urban life that he was facing, which was full of distrust between people’.¹⁷ Despite the fact that *Love at Gulang Island* is not set in Hong Kong and the author does not address Hong Kong explicitly as the ‘wicked city’, the protagonist expresses resentment of the city and seeks a simple and a genuine way of life in the countryside.

A-Hong thoroughly despises the city, although the novel does not give a precise description of it or what he condemns. The only link to the city is his cousin’s friends, young city-dwellers who are characterized as wealthy, pretentious and dishonest.¹⁸ The urban environment stands in opposition to the rural setting of the island and the sea. A-Hong expresses his joyful anticipation of exploring Mother Nature in a short poem: ‘Hoist the sails of life, I am looking for the essence of nature’.¹⁹

8.3 Bai Mu’s *A-Hong’s Boyhood*: ‘This fishing rod will accompany him as he enters a new life’.

The novel *A-Hong’s Boyhood* 阿弘的童年 (not to be confused with A-Hong in *Love at Gulang Island*) was written by Bai Mu 白木 [Pei-Mo] in the early 1950s and published in 1954/55. Bai Mu’s original name was Zheng Jianbo 鄭健柏,²⁰ and he is also known by several pen names including Li Kuang 力匡, Bai Ben 百本 and Wen Zhi 文植. He was born in 1927 in Guangdong, where he grew up and went to school, and graduated from Sun Yat-Sen University with a major in history. In the 1950s he lived in Hong Kong for several years, working as a middle-school teacher and co-editing the literary journals *Everyman’s literature* (*Renren wenxue*

¹⁷ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], ‘Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s’, 151.

¹⁸ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, *Gulangyu zhi lian* 鼓浪嶼之戀 (*Love at Gulang Island*), 26.

¹⁹ Huang Sicheng 黃思騁, 34.

²⁰ Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, ‘Li Kuang de yuanming 力匡的原名 (Li Kuang’s Original Name)’, *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 172 (1 April 1999): 20–21.

人人文學) and *Hai Lan* 海瀾 until 1958, when he moved to Singapore, where he died in 1991.²¹

8.3.1 Plot synopsis

A-Hong's Boyhood consists of nine chapters which were serialized in *Everyman's Literature* (*Renren wenxue* 人人文學) in 1954. It is written in the third-person perspective of a naive and innocent nine-year-old boy. The first half of the novel depicts the daily life of a child named Lao Shihong 勞士弘, nickname A-Hong, who grows up under the protection of his parents and aunt in Guangdong and attends primary school. The novel begins with the first day of the new school term and describes how his aunt interrupts his dream to wake him up for school, although he would prefer to stay in bed. At school A-Hong meets a new classmate with whom he becomes friends. During a short winter break his parents decide to follow the wishes of A-Hong's grandfather and send him to the countryside to spend New Year with him. At the end of the holiday A-Hong departs sadly from his grandfather's house. This is not his only goodbye: in the second half of the novel he has to bid farewell to two schoolteachers, to his aunt, who elopes with her boyfriend, and to his classmate and friend Chen Zhuping 陳竹平.²² He also experiences a series of sudden deaths: of a cricket, of his grandfather, and of

²¹ Zheng Zhengheng 鄭政恆, 'Loushi changye: Li Kuang he tade xiaoshuo 陋室長夜: 力匡和他的小說 (Long Night in a Plain Room: Li Kuang and His Novels)', in *Changye yihou de gushi: Li Kuang duanbian xiaoshuo xuan* 長夜以後的故事: 力匡短篇小說選 (*Stories after the Long Night: A Collection of Li Kuang's Novels*), ed. Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] and Zheng Zhengheng 鄭政恆 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2013), 16; Liu Yichang 劉以鬯, *Xianggang wenxue zuojia zhuanlüe* 香港文學作家傳略 (*Brief Biographies of Hong Kong Writers*), 6. On his working for the journal *Everyman's Literature*. See Li Kuang 力匡, "'Renren wenxue", "hailan" he wo 「人人文學」、「海瀾」和我 ("Everyman's Literature", "Hailan" and Me)", *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 21 (5 September 1986): 18.

²² According to Shu Nian, the character Chen Zhuping is inspired by a girl that he fell in love with as a child. She has also appeared in many of his other works. Shu Nian 舒年, 'Xianggang zuojia Zongying zhi er, beichuang de yiyu, baimu 香港作家踪影之二, 北窗的抑鬱, 百木 (Two Traces of Hong Kong Writers, the Depression at the North Window, Baimu)', *Zhongguo xuesheng zhoubao* 中國學生周報 (*Chinese Students' Weekly*), no. 975 (26 March 1971).

Zhuping's mother. These partings and deaths become part of the protagonist's growth process, and by the end he has matured and is no longer a little boy.

8.3.2 *Analysis*

The novel is set in the city of Guangdong and in the countryside where A-Hong's grandfather lives. Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han] argues that Bai Mu's 'writing does not fit into the mainstream representation of refugee literature in which the village is always in opposition to the city'.²³ The following paragraph argues that village and city do not stand in contrast to each other even though they are opposing realms that evoke different feelings in the boy. The village and his experience of nature give A-Hong a new way of seeing the world.

Just before the winter break begins A-Hong's parents receive a letter from his grandfather in which he expresses the desire to see his grandson and spend New Year with him. The parents propose this idea to A-Hong, who does not want to go out to the country because it does not sound exciting: 'A-Hong has to go to the countryside by himself and will be alone in this place in the country where there are no electric lights and no running water. And where he can't buy a book, and nor can he watch a film. He has to spend the whole winter holiday with his grandfather, an old man who needs a stick to walk from the room to the hall'.²⁴ The father dares not refuse A-Hong's grandfather's wish and books a ticket on the boat for his son, who has no choice but to give in. On the day of his departure his parents and aunt are at the harbour to bid him farewell: '[t]his is the first time in A-Hong's life that he has travelled without his parents and aunt, and he has no one to depend or rely on. This feeling of solitude and loneliness is totally strange to him. He has no opportunity to behave like a spoiled child: he cannot stamp his feet and howl all by himself. He can only shed silent tears'.²⁵ A-Hong realizes that he is leaving part of his past behind when the ship puts out to sea and he sees the

²³ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 'Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s', 147.

²⁴ Bai Mu 白木, *A-Hong de tongnian 阿弘的童年 (A-Hong's Boyhood)* (Hong Kong: Ziyou chubanshe 自由出版社 (Freedom Press), 1955), 21.

²⁵ Bai Mu 白木, 24.

familiar shapes of his parents and his aunt becoming smaller and smaller until they disappear: '[t]he ship is moving; he is leaving his dad, mum, aunt, that teacher who has a beautiful dimple when she smiles; the art teacher who says that A-Hong belongs to the Futurism movement and that little girl who gave him gloves for the foreign doll. They are all getting further away with every minute'.²⁶ The protagonist knows that a new chapter in life is ahead: '[h]e holds the fishing rod tightly, and this rod will accompany him as he enters a new life'. After two days on the ship he finally arrives at the village: '[a]t nightfall the next day A-Hong arrives in the home village, where he has never been before'.²⁷

The next day he steps out of his grandfather's house for the first time and explores the village and its surroundings. At this point A-Hong realizes that different life paths exist for people of different families and socio-economic backgrounds:

A-Hong walks out of the front door and down the stairs. In a narrow lane he meets a child with a black cotton padded jacket, who seems to be about the same age as he is. He is holding a thin bamboo stick that is longer than A-Hong's fishing rod, with which he rounds up ducklings that have strayed from both sides of the path. The two children raise their heads and look at each other. Both have surprisingly dark eyes. One has been growing up in the city all his life, raised and pampered by his family. One is a poor village boy who has to work and earn a living in the country early in the morning for the sake of the family. They look at each other; A-Hong first steps aside. As the village boy chases and herds the ducklings they pass, making squeaking noises. A-Hong wants to count them, but finds he cannot. The village boy fumbles around with the stick, careful not to hit A-Hong; they hurriedly pass.²⁸

The comparison between the city boy and the village boy illustrates the social gap between the two. A-Hong knows he is in a more fortunate position than the other boy, who could have been him. A-Hong has a secure, stable home life with caring parents who are giving him a happy boyhood, whereas the boy from the village is

²⁶ Bai Mu 白木, 24.

²⁷ Bai Mu 白木, 24.

²⁸ Bai Mu 白木, 29.

struggling to make a living and has shouldered the responsibility for the entire family.

A-Hong discovers many places that he likes in the village, and arrives at the conclusion that living in the country is not as bad as he had assumed. His experiences in the village allows him to compare urban and rural life:

The weather is very clear. The pale blue sky seems vast and endless without messy electric cables overhead and the dark soot of the city. A gentle breeze is blowing, and white clouds like cotton-wadding balls are floating slowly and quietly, unlike those speedy, noisy aeroplanes over the city. On that winter morning everywhere is filled with warm sunlight.²⁹

In the context of the binary of sustaining rurality vs. oppressive city in coming-of-age novels by the southbound literati, *A-Hong's Boyhood* demonstrates that there is a clear boundary between city and village. The scene on the ship marks an important moment of transition in the novel not only between urban and rural, rich and poor, but also between the protagonist's past and his present. With the perspective that A-Hong has gained from life in the village he is able to compare and look at his life in the city from a new angle. While *A-Hong's Boyhood* may not depict the protagonist's alienation from the city, it clearly highlights how the time he spends in the village contributes to his growth and true understanding of the world.

8.3.3 Reception of *A-Hong's Boyhood*

Bai Mu was an acclaimed poet in Hong Kong's literary circles and famous for his lyrical texts.³⁰ The literary scholar Gu Yuanqing 古遠清 praises him as the most popular Hong Kong poet in the 1950s.³¹ Despite spending a long time in China and Singapore, Hong Kong remained a vivid memory throughout his life. Before moving there in the 1950s he had lived in Guangdong for twenty-two years. After

²⁹ Bai Mu 白木, 29.

³⁰ Li Jieru 黎潔如, 'Xijian Li Kuang 喜見力匡 (On Being Delighted to Meet Li Kuang)', *Xianggang wenzue 香港文學 (Hong Kong Literary)*, no. 20 (5 August 1986): 84–85.

³¹ Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, 'Li Kuang: wushi niandai zhimingdu zuigao de Xianggang shiren 力匡——五十年代知名度最高的香港詩人 (Li Kuang: The Most Celebrated Poet in Hong Kong's 50s)', 49.

two short stays in Hong Kong, from 1937 to 1939 and 1951 to 1958, Bai Mu spent the remaining thirty-three years of his life in Singapore. The impression that Hong Kong left on Bai Mu was profound and lasted, as Huang Kangjian 黃康顯 states, for many years after he had settled in Singapore.³² According to Huang, Hong Kong's literary circle had been his lifeblood. For instance he continued to publish short stories in the magazine *Hong Kong Literary* (*Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學) after moving to Singapore, including *Suzhai de Huanghun* (1985) 蘇宅的黃昏 and 'A-She' de Suanzhiyi (1987) 「阿舍」的酸枝椅.³³ His essay 'Three Hong Kongs' (*Sange Xianggang* 三個香港) (1986) shows the author's different memories of Hong Kong and his ambivalent feelings about the city. Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲 reports that each time he stayed in Hong Kong the city invoked a different state of mind.³⁴ The first time he visited Hong Kong was in 1937 during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), when Japanese troops had invaded Guangzhou 廣州. His parents took the ten-year-old Bai Mu to seek refuge Hong Kong. He noted that '[i]n the minds of most people, Hong Kong was the solution'. The place was chosen for practical reasons: 'Hong Kong is just on the other end of the Kowloon-Canton Railway. It's a half-day trip and one needs neither a passport nor to apply for a visa'.³⁵ For two years Bai Mu attended middle school in Tai Po, and recalls that during this time he had a strange and novel feeling (*xinqi* 新奇) about Hong Kong.³⁶ The writer's second visit, from 1951 to 1958, was marked by a childhood memory of tasting some of the local delicacies for the first time: '[w]ell, I have also spent my childhood years in Hong Kong, eating chocolate and cane sugar porridge'.³⁷ Although Bai Mu had fond memories of that time as child

³² Huang Kangxian 黃康顯, 'Li Kuang Xianggang zhi lian 力匡的香港之戀 (Li Kuang's Love for Hong Kong)', *Xianggang bihui* 香港筆會 (*PEN Hong Kong*), no. 7 (31 March 1996): 145f.

³³ Huang Kangxian 黃康顯, 146.

³⁴ Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 'Li Kuang de huigui Xianggang 力匡的回歸香港 (The Return of Li Kuang to Hong Kong)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 89 (5 May 1992): 20.

³⁵ Li Kuang 力匡, 'Sange Xianggang 三個香港 (Three Hong Kongs)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (*Hong Kong Literary*), no. 23 (5 November 1986): 72.

³⁶ Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 'Li Kuang de huigui Xianggang 力匡的回歸香港 (The Return of Li Kuang to Hong Kong)', 20.

³⁷ Li Kuang 力匡, 'Sange Xianggang 三個香港 (Three Hong Kongs)', 73.

in Hong Kong, his second visit was not so pleasant and was rather a struggle. This period of his life was defined by many obstacles including years of unemployment, a change of profession, and pursuing a career as a writer. As Huang concludes, these were miserable (*xinsuan* 辛酸) and restless (*luwan* 旅萬) years for writers. Bai Mu's last visit to Hong Kong was for ten days in 1985, during which he reminisced nostalgically (*zhuiyi* 追憶) about his former experiences there.³⁸

8.3.4 Alienation and nostalgia in Bai Mu's poems

There are two main themes in Bai Mu's poetry of the 1950s. The first expresses the growing feeling of alienation and loneliness that he experienced in his daily life in Hong Kong. The first poem he wrote in and about Hong Kong is headed 'No title' (*Wuti* 無題) (1950)³⁹ and addresses his aching loneliness. He likens this time to a nightmare:

<p>如同經過一場惡夢， 在生命的又一階段醒來， 自己卻面對著陌生的年齡， 和陌生的時代。</p>	<p>As in a nightmare, waking up to another stage of life to face oneself in a strange age and a strange era.</p>
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In another poem, 'I don't like this place' (*Wo bu xihuan zhege difang* 我不喜歡這個地方),⁴⁰ written two years later in 1952, Gu Yuanqing 古遠清 notes that Bai Mu took the viewpoint of the migrant and thematized the frustration of the foreigner in that 'strange place' that was Hong Kong, as illustrated in the final four-line stanzas:

<p>誰都不喜歡工作， 填不滿的時間就用來消遣， 這裡缺少真正的友誼，</p>	<p>Nobody likes to work, unfilled time is used for distractions, this place lacks true friendship,</p>
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³⁸ Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 'Li Kuang de huigui Xianggang 力匡的回歸香港 (The Return of Li Kuang to Hong Kong)', 20.

³⁹ Huang Aoyun 黃傲雲, 43.

⁴⁰ Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, 'Li Kuang: wushi niandai zhimingdu zuigao de Xianggang shiren 力匡——五十年代知名度最高的香港詩人 (Li Kuang: The Most Celebrated Poet in Hong Kong's 50s)', 48.

偽裝的笑臉裡沒有溫暖。

there is no kindness behind the
disguised smile.

這裡不容易找到真正的「人」，
如同漆黑的晚上沒有眼光，
看這一切如同惡夢，
我不喜歡這奇怪的地方。

It is not easy to find real people here,
like a pitch-black night
without visibility,
to look at it like a nightmare,
I don't like this strange place.

The second theme running through Bai Mu's work is nostalgia. Gu asserts that recalling memories of the past helps to overcome Bai Mu's sense of loneliness: 'no matter how cold and lonely, he could not find any warmth as an "island traveller". And yet he was also unwilling to return, and nor would he have dared to face the new regime in China. He had to rely on his memories to fill the emptiness and loneliness in his heart'.⁴¹ For this reason Bai Mu revived his youth set in Guangzhou, with the great nostalgia evident in the 1987 poem 'I remember' (*Wo jide* 我記得).

The literary scholar Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] comes to a similar conclusion in his analysis of Bai Mu's oeuvre: '[a]n important theme in his early work is Guangzhou City, where he was born and raised'.⁴² Comparing *Hong's Boyhood* with Bai Mu's *Holy City* (*Shengcheng* 聖城, 1956), Liang notes that

⁴¹ Gu Yuanqing 古遠清, 43. For further discussion on nostalgia and the southbound writers. See Chen Zhide 陳智德, 'Huaixiang yu fouding de yigui: Xu Xu he Li Kuang 懷鄉與否定的依歸: 徐訏和力匡 (Homesickness and the Denial to Return: Xu Xu and Li Kuang)', *Zuojia* 作家 (Writer), no. 13 (December 2001): 112–13; Wang Yuping 王宇平, 'Shanghai "xiandai pai" de huaixiang bing yu Xianggang xiangxiang 上海「現代派」的懷鄉病與香港想像 (Shanghai "Modernist's" Homesickness and the Imagination of Hong Kong)', *Xianggang wenxue* 香港文學 (Hong Kong Literary), no. 310 (1 October 2010): 75; Guo Yanmei 郭艷媚, 'Siceng xiangshi yan nanlai: qianyi Li Kuang de "xiangbei chuangu" yu "renmian taohua" shi 似曾相識燕南來——淺議力匡的「向北窗戶」與「人面桃花」詩 (A Déjà Vu with the Southbound: A Brief Comment on Li Kuang's Poems "The Northward Window" and "A Man's Face and Peach Blossom")', *Shengyun shikan* 聲韻詩刊 (Voice & Verse Poetic Magazine), no. 23 (15 April 2015): 117.

⁴² Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 'Li Kuang bixia de sange chengshi 力匡筆下的三個城市 (The Three Cities in Li Kuang's Writing)', in *Changye yihou de gushi: Li Kuang duanbian xiaoshuo xuan* 長夜以後的故事: 力匡短篇小說選 (Stories after the Long Night: Selected Short Stories of Li Kuang), ed. Zheng Zhengheng 鄭政恆 and Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 (Zhonghua Book Company), 2013), 2.

'we can especially sense how the description of his past in Guangzhou is filled with affection'. The link to the past can be observed in the work of many migrant writers. According to Liang, 'the southbound literati were reluctant to part from their past, just as if they wanted to recall the past by writing and keep this precious image in their hearts'.⁴³

As well as poems with the *leitmotifs* of alienation and nostalgia, Bai Mu's coming-of-age story about a young boy growing up in Guangzhou, *A-Hong's Boyhood*, has been discussed by Bildungsroman scholars. Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan] mentions it in his introduction to Bai Mu; Zheng Zhengheng's 鄭政恆 article 'Li Kuang and his Works' provides a list of Bai Mu's entire corpus of writing and the brief description: '*A-Hong's Boyhood* is a coming-of-age novel of a young boy that consists of nine short stories serialized in *Everyman's Literature* and assembled into a novel. The schoolboy Lao Shihong 勞士弘 experiences all sorts of partings in the novel and grows from these experiences'.⁴⁴ Huang Shuxian's 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han] paper builds on Liang's discussion and argues that Bai Mu's writings include a strong emphasis on the past and his own past life. Nostalgic memories serve as a retreat and a form of escapism. Huang argues that memory has a dual function in Bai Mu's writing: not only is it applied to evoke a sense of nostalgia but 'it is also a device for the past or for incidents that the protagonist may not have understood well enough when he was young'.⁴⁵

8.4 Qi Huang's *Yindi: A Barcarolle*: 'The street light seems much paler under the moonlight'.

The story *Yindi: A Barcarolle* primarily takes place on a boat at a typhoon shelter in Hong Kong, and concerns the feelings and thoughts of a fishergirl whose life is about to change because she has met a boy whom she might marry. The story

⁴³ Liang Bingjun 梁秉鈞 [Leung Ping-kwan], 8.

⁴⁴ Zheng Zhengheng 鄭政恆, 'Li Kuang he tade zuopin 力匡和他的作品 (Li Kuang and His Works)', 36.

⁴⁵ Huang Shuxian 黃淑嫻 [Wong Shuk-han], 'Bildungsroman in Hong Kong Literature of the 1950s', 147.

starts with the description of the protagonist feeling restless: 'Yindi cannot sleep, she opens her eyes and looks at the beam of light that falls through the crack of the cabin – the bright gas light from the street on the shore. She is in something of a gloomy mood'.⁴⁶ The image of the street and the street light recurs several times during the story in contrast to the shelter and landing vessels on the sea. Yindi eventually gets up and sits on the top of the bow cabin, observing the peaceful surroundings:

The tide is rising and the boat has almost reached the level of the street. The full moon spreads a silver net across the thin clouds. The typhoon shelter is filled with the faint sound of the heaving, swaying tide. The street light seems much paler under the moonlight; the night is so quiet. Yindi thinks about the bottom of the ocean, and wonders if it is as deep and dark as the night; her bright clear eyes stare at the water of the ocean.⁴⁷

Her thoughts and feelings merge with the elements of the night and the motion of the sea. The lights on the street on the shore fade against the intensity of the full moon, whereas the night above the ocean is as dark and mysterious as the floor of the ocean. The only signs of civilization in that dark night are the landing vessels and a few cars: '[t]he vessels beyond the typhoon embankment send out a deep whistle into the darkness now and then. And at times a car passes swiftly by on the street, but the typhoon shelter is calm and peaceful, except for the slight squealing sound from the ropes and bamboo poles on the rising tide'.⁴⁸ Apart from these sounds the night is calm, but this tranquillity does not reach Yindi. Her restlessness and anticipation of the next day make her feel as if a burning fire is about to burst out of her chest: 'Yindi notices that its getting chillier outside but her heart is burning with youthful expectations. It still has a raging flame, like the mythical eternal flame that burns secretly in the ocean 10,000 feet down'.⁴⁹ She can barely calm herself down: 'Yindi breaths heavily. She wants to break free, but her waist feels completely limp. Her face is burning hot; she thinks she has some

⁴⁶ Qi Heng 齊恒, 'Yindi 銀弟 (A Barcarolle)', 52.

⁴⁷ Qi Heng 齊恒, 53.

⁴⁸ Qi Heng 齊恒, 53.

⁴⁹ Qi Heng 齊恒, 53.

sort of fire burning in her chest and erupting in raging flames'.⁵⁰ In the end only the flowing tide and the distinct smell of the water can soothe her and remind her of the real world: '[t]he rising tide has reached its peak. The typhoon shelter is filled with the salty smell of seawater. The familiar smell brings Yindi back from her fantasy to the realm of reality; she feels a little tired'.⁵¹

In this story the protagonist's emotions and feelings are interwoven with the deep darkness of the sea and the night. The rising tide reflects Yindi's inner world, and her feeling of agitation only changes when it reaches its zenith. The fishergirl is part of the sea, whereas the street, the street light, and the car embody the city that is and remains beyond Yindi's realm.

8.5 City and village in the southbound writers' coming-of-age novels

The migrant writers approach the topic of the city in different ways in their novels. In a traditional Bildungsroman the main character embarks on a journey from the country or a village to a big city, encountering different kinds of people and obstacles as well as new opportunities from which to learn and grow. The setting is therefore crucial for the formation and growth of the Bildungsroman hero or heroine. It is interesting that the Hong Kong coming-of-age stories are reversed, with the protagonists retreating or escaping to the countryside or an inner realm where they find their true selves. In the novels discussed in this study the focus is largely on the protagonists' interiority and reflections. Inner values such as integrity, humanity, and morality are the *leitmotifs* that run through these novels, and the city functions as the epitome of social, moral, and material decadence. The city in these coming-of-age novels has a liberating effect as the individual is given the option to reevaluate and challenge existing forms and norms and access them from a different standpoint. Only in or through the city does the hero achieve a higher level of *Bildung*. The characters in *The Hotel* are subjected to the city's consumption- and money-oriented society and have no

⁵⁰ Qi Heng 齊恒, 56.

⁵¹ Qi Heng 齊恒, 57.

choice but to adapt to it or become part of it. *Love at Gulang Island* shows a retreat to nature and criticizes the shallowness and arrogance of city people. The young protagonist in *A-Hong's Boyhood* gains an insight into village life, and spending his holiday at his grandfather's place and exploring the countryside broaden his horizons and help him to understand the different social strata. And the heroine in *Yindi: A Barcarolle* embarks on a spiritual trip in which her emotions, hopes, and expectations are interwoven with the sea and its surroundings, while the city serves as a trope for remoteness and elusiveness. The countryside-city distinction in these novels is a major characteristic of these texts in various ways, and the writers convey their critical views of the lack of intimacy in personal relationships in the city and in Hong Kong in general.

Summary

The four coming-of-age novels of the 1950s discussed in this chapter focus on the protagonists' growth in and outside the city and Hong Kong. The city described in these novels does not provide the protagonists with the norms and values they need to achieve *Bildung*. They either fail or strive to adapt to the commercialized life of the city or retreat to nature or the village, where they find some form of spiritual guidance that helps them to grow. The city in these coming-of-age novels, with the exception of *The Hotel*, serves as a trope to counter established views by fleeing the urban setting and exploring the path of growth and maturation in rural and remote areas. The path, therefore, goes from the city to the countryside, but after gaining personal experience and insight from the country setting the character arrives at a new and better understanding of her or his past and present life. The heroine in *The Hotel*, on the other hand, does not retreat into the country, even though her *Bildung* is attributed to her feeling of alienation from the city and the loss of her innocence, both of which she overcomes by not surrendering. She reaches the next stage of moral and spiritual progress having realized and challenged the value of the principles taught by society. The descriptions of the city and urban life fostering indifference and selfishness among the people contrast sharply with the beauty and simplicity of life in nature. The countryside and the village can be read as symbolic of China and the southbound literati's past and their nostalgic memories. The country-city distinction has a dual function; it serves as criticism of Hong Kong society at the time of writing, as well as a warm memorialization of a bygone time

CONCLUSION

Tracing a very disrupted lineage of Bildungsromans in modern Chinese literary history, this study reveals a revival of the youth plot in the guise of the southbound literati's coming-of-age novels. Having left their country of origin to find themselves on Hong Kong's 'margin's margin', these Chinese intellectuals in the diaspora were keen to revive their culture by deploying the figure of youth in their reworking of the Bildungsroman motif. By placing their narratives in the context of Hong Kong's colonial period, the literati found a way of addressing the passage from childhood (depicted as nostalgic memories of a lost homeland) to adulthood (constrained by the harsh realities of Hong Kong) in this genre. This journey marks a symbolic meeting of the (modern) self and (colonial) society.

The majority of the southbound literati actively engaged with the publishing industry. Studying how the publishing field developed during the 1950s clarifies the prominence of the southbound community's involvement with the rise in mass printed media production. Serialized fiction – the narrative form chosen here to present these writers' coming-of-age novels – became a way of transcending the spatio-temporal frame of the novelistic plot due to readers' simultaneous consumption of news items.

The narratives by the Chinese émigré writers demonstrate their promotion of cultural nationalist Chinese rhetoric in Hong Kong during the 1950s. The migrant intellectuals functioned as mediators and advocates of Chinese culture to counter what they saw as Hong Kong's shallow and materialist culture. As literati they felt a strong sense of socio-moral responsibility. They also felt lost and marginalized, not only by their home country but also by the locals in Hong Kong. Their traditional Chinese values provided them with moral and spiritual guidance and were their only link to their homeland and previous lives. Social integration in Hong Kong was difficult: – 'They arrive at this place that they do not understand, neither through looking nor through listening' (*The Hotel*, 157) – and caused them to turn away from the city and Hong Kong. Rather than

accommodating to society in Hong Kong, these novels show their protagonists' retreating into memories or nature, the latter representing the beauty and simplicity of life. The Hong Kong coming-of-age novels show the path of a *Bildung* that can only be gained by the protagonist leaving the place of origin and challenging established moral values and principles. Finally, after passing through tests and trial he or she returns to the point of departure as a mature and enlightened individual. The journey of growth is a way into the (foreign) world and at the same time into themselves, and only by losing themselves in the world can they return with a new perspective, achieved through *Bildung*.

Studying these novels as exemplars of the Chinese Bildungsroman lineage – such as it is, and making allowances for points of difference from the original Western genre – yields more comprehensive understanding of the complex tensions between the southbound, local and foreign (imagined) communities on the one hand, and the reader, the author and the text on the other.

Reading serialized coming-of-age novels involves, among other things, having to browse through life chapters, stage by stage, turning one page at a time.

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「一九五〇年代的香港文學與文化」叢書 (六本)
"Hong Kong Literature and Culture of the 1950s" Series (6 books)



世斯的一九五〇年代
 1950香港文學與文化

Ye Si's 1950s: Criticisms on Hong Kong Literature and Culture

「一九五〇年代香港文學與文化」叢書是由嶺南大學人文學科研究中心編輯，中華書局出版。其為研究資助局優配研究金項目「一九五〇年代的香港文學與文化」（項目編號：340910）研究成果。

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痛苦中有歡樂的時代
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真話的謊言
 1950香港文學與文化

True Lies: Selected Short Stories of Evan Yang



五〇年代香港詩選
 1950香港文學與文化

An Anthology of Hong Kong Poetry of the 1950s

1.1 Hong Kong Literature and Culture of the 1950s Series



4.1 Cover of the literary supplement *Youths' Garden*

附表：一九五〇年後香港二十二種主要文藝期刊

期 刊	主 編	創 刊	出版期數及年期	性 質
文壇月刊	盧森	50年3月	298期至74年12月 共24年10月	傳統
人人文學	黃思聰	52年5月	33期至55年1月 共2年9月	創作
中國學生周報	徐東濱、胡菊人等	52年7月25日	至74年7月20日 共22年	綜合、年青化
文學世界(季刊)	黃天石(傑克)	54年4月1日	50期至65年6月 共9年	傳統
海瀾	力匡	55年11月	16期至57年2月	創作
文藝新潮	馬朗	56年3月	15期至59年5月 共3年2月	現代派
文藝世紀	編委會	57年6月	150期至69年5月 共12年半	寫實
南洋文藝	編委會	61年1月	24期至62年12月 共2年	創作
華僑文藝及文藝	丁平、韋陀等	62年6月	26期至65年1月 共2年半	創作
伴侶(半月刊)	李怡等	63年1月1日	150期左右至69年初 共6年多	普及化、綜合
好望角(半月刊)	李英豪、崑南等	63年3月	14期至63年12月	現代派
當代文藝	徐速	65年12月	161期至79年4月 共13年半	創作、普及化
詩風(雙月刊)	黃國彬等	72年6月	116期至84年6月 共12年	創作加理論
海洋文藝	吳其敏、彥火等	72年11月	79期至80年10月 共8年	寫實
文林	林以亮、陸離、也斯	72年12月	15期至74年2月	綜合
大拇指	許迪鏘等十餘人	75年11月	至1988年	年青化
八方	黃繼持等	75年11月	至今,已出十多期	理論加創作
素葉文學	何福仁等	80年6月	18期至83年6月 共3年	創作附理論
當代文藝(復刊)	黃南翔	82年9月	21期至84年8月 共2年	創作、普及化
文藝(季刊)	陳錫麟、黎海華等	82年3月	12期至84年12月 共3年	創作與文化
香港文學	劉以鬯	85年1月	至今	創作與理論
博益月刊	黃子程、李國威	87年9月	至1989年中	綜合、普及化

5.1 Twenty-two of Hong Kong's major art and literary periodicals from 1950s onwards

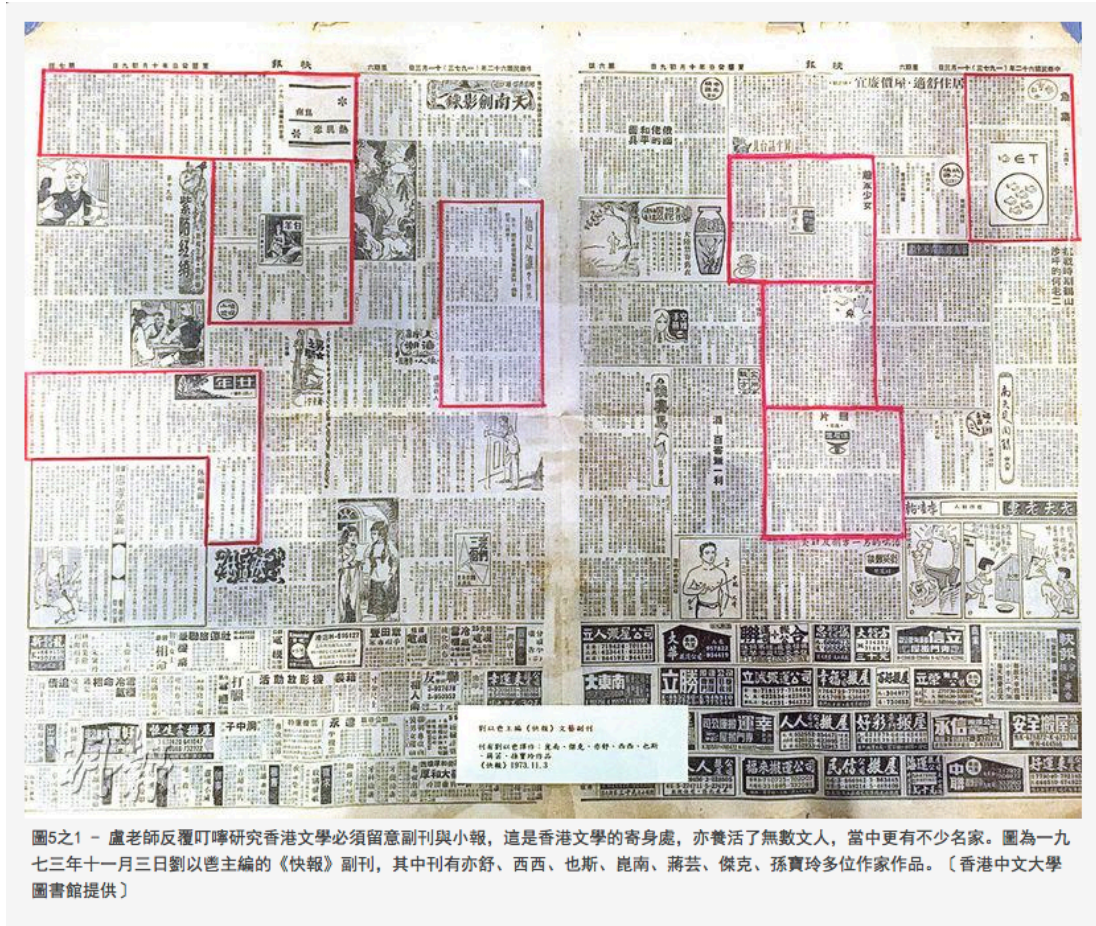
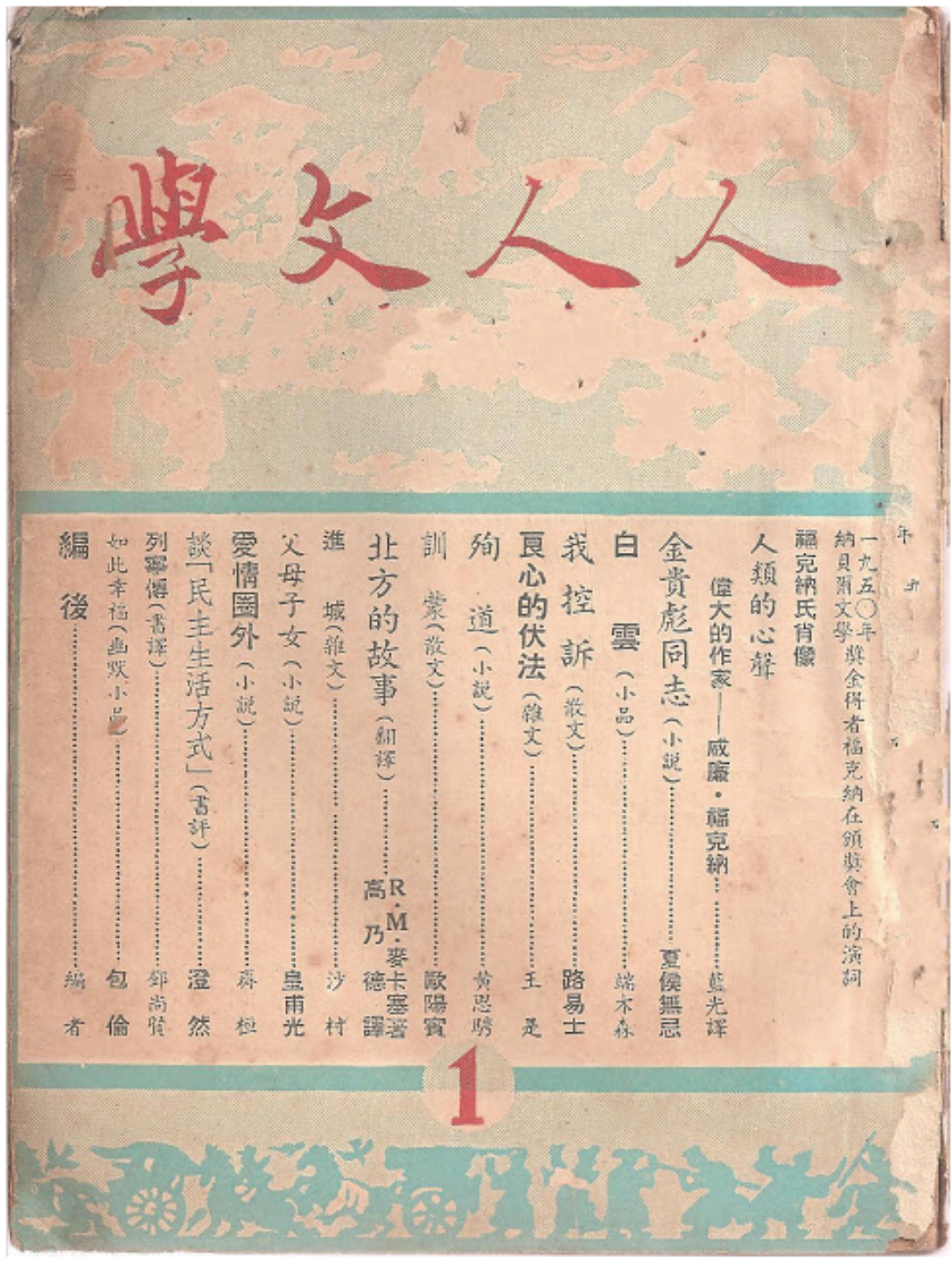


圖5之1 - 盧老師反覆叮嚀研究香港文學必須留意副刊與小報，這是香港文學的寄身處，亦養活了無數文人，當中更有不少名家。圖為一九七三年十一月三日劉以鬯主編的《快報》副刊，其中刊有亦舒、西西、也斯、崑南、蔣芸、傑克、孫寶玲多位作家作品。〔香港中文大學圖書館提供〕

5.2 Supplement of the newspaper *Express* (*Kuai bao* 快報) edited by Liu Yichang 劉以鬯 from 3 January 1973



5.3 Cover page of the supplement *Everyman's Literature* (Renren wenxue 人人文學) from 1950



5.4 List of contents of *Everyman's Literature*

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I herewith declare that I have composed the present thesis myself and without use of any other than the cited sources and aids.

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